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ECLECTIC ENGLISH CLASSICS
SELECTED POEMS
AND TALES OF
EDGAR ALLAN POE
STOTT



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Book 58

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Edgar A Poe

ECLECTIC ENGLISH CLASSICS

SELECTED POEMS AND TALES
OF
EDGAR ALLAN POE

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SELECTED POEMS AND TALES OF POE

W. P. I

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No 1

CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	5
POEMS	
To — —	13
To the River —	13
To Helen	14
The Sleeper	14
Lenore	16
The Valley of Unrest	17
Hymn	18
To One in Paradise	19
To F—	19
To Zante	20
Bridal Ballad	20
The Conqueror Worm	21
Dreamland	23
The Raven	24
Eulalie	29
Ulalume	30
To Helen.	33
For Annie	35
The Bells	38
Annabel Lee	42
To My Mother	43
Eldorado	43
TALES	
The Assiguation.	45
The Fall of the House of Usher	59
A Descent into the Maelström	81
The Goldbug	100
The Purloined Letter	140
SUGGESTIONS AND NOTES	161

INTRODUCTION

EDGAR ALLAN POE

HIS BOYHOOD. Poe was born in Boston, January 19th, 1809. It is well to remember that it was this year that brought to the world a half-dozen men who are world-known and loved to-day. The early death of Poe's parents probably changed his career and fortunes. Had they lived, we might have heard during all these years of the famous actor-playwright of Richmond, Virginia. Doubtless, he would have been a stage child with the wonderful wealth of stage lore and tradition surrounding him. But this possibility vanished in so brief a time!

David Poe, Edgar's father, had been making a losing fight against consumption, for its ravages were unrelenting and the man's body was already frail. He died in Norfolk in the latter part of 1811. With poverty facing her, Edgar's mother came to Richmond a little later to become a member of a theatrical company popular in that day. She possessed a genuine histrionic talent and, had she lived, she could have easily cared for and educated her children. But the exposure and want of former days had their reckoning. She died in the last days of the same year.

Friends did not delay in offering protection and care to the little ones left in such great need. The baby sister was promptly given all necessary comforts by a Mrs. MacKenzie. Edgar was taken into a home which he was destined later to make famous. The Allan household was one of finer culture than Edgar's own would have been, even though the elder Poe had lived. It meant to the infant boy a shield from distress and want, for we know that Mrs. Allan was ever eager to perform the kindly services that a motherly nature prompted. The Allan household and that of the MacKenzies were always on the friendliest terms and Edgar had in infancy and boyhood the companionship of his little

sister. Meanwhile in both homes he was absorbing the Southern spirit, and its stamp, coming as it did in these formative years, proved indelible. His attire was always in keeping with the standard of living which became his by virtue of the Allans' generosity. The lad's face is described as plainly reflecting his sensitive nature. Chief among his juvenile abilities was the art of reading. This may be considered as indicative of his later talent for poetry.

When the boy was but six years of age, the Allans went abroad and Edgar was placed in a private school near London. The institution was pleasantly situated in a neighborhood teeming with quaint romance and historical tradition. Here the heart of the boy, who later awakened a whole nation to a knowledge and admiration of his literary powers, dreamed its first wonderful dreams and fashioned out its childish imaginings. The impress of these days was more lasting than anybody knew. The sunlight played over the ruins of weird castles and set his imagination on fire with an almost sacred flame. With eyes that saw beyond the material side of school life he marked the marching of ancient heroes and his ears caught the gentle tread of the fair court ladies who long before had run softly across those velvet lawns or found their lovers in sequestered, silvan bowers. To-day, if you turn to his tales, you can see the same things which lingered in his boyhood brain—bits of architecture, English landscapes, and the strange castles that so easily became the habitations for the still stranger creatures which a mature creative faculty later wrought.

The family returned to Richmond in the summer of 1820. The lad was now given a schooling under two educated masters. We have said that he was not greatly unlike his fellows. He was, perhaps, a bit neater, but this was owing to the influence of the Allan household, which meantime had become wealthy beyond the usual fortune of even the prosperous of that day. He was active to a large and commendable degree. Only once do we find him varying the ordinary routine of daily life. It came with a visit into a companion's family circle. It was, like his own, a home of culture and the schoolmate's mother became his first boyhood's love. Let us promptly remember that Poe had

no mother and that affection and emotion were his by birth-right. The companion's mother, Jane Stith Stanard, became Poe's "Helen"—obviously since the name "Jane" sounded inappropriate for such a gentle and lovable lady. To her he wrote one of his most delicate lyrics. The melancholy which naturally followed the announcement of her death made a very certain impression upon his mind and heart and did much in shaping his later erratic career.

EARLY MANHOOD. One might almost as readily choose for this heading, "Later Boyhood." Poe was ever the odd combination of man and boy. The year 1825 found him leaving Master William Burke's classical school. Here he had been carefully drilled by Master Clarke and later by Master Burke. The young man's departure was made that he might begin some special drill preparatory to entering, with greater ease, the newly established University of Virginia. He matriculated as a student in this institution during the following February and completed the session. Though only in his seventeenth year, he brought from the University high honors in the languages. Likewise he brought to Mr. Allan some disagreeable debts. That gentleman, who had been very careful of the young poet's wants and who now was financially far more able to dispense luxuries than ever before, did perhaps the wisest thing that occurred to his distressed mind. He decided that in his own counting-room he would train the prodigal for the necessary battle with life. He reasoned that the world was no place for a young man so careless with money. He proposed to make of young Poe a sort of financier. But the highly artistic young man did what was the natural thing for one of his temperament: he rebelled. Running away from that which proved distasteful, Poe soon found himself in Boston. Here, shortly after his arrival, he published, in 1827, his first volume of verse which he called *Tamerlane and Other Poems*.

Neither wealth nor great recognition followed the publication of this slender volume. For temporary support Poe turned to the army. For two years he served, and was a good soldier. We may readily believe that it was the display of the cavalier spirit which was so native to the old South.

Through sheer merit he rose to the rank of sergeant, exhibiting a certain degree of Byron's ambition to gain military standing. Perhaps desiring advancement in more rapid strides, he was given his release in order that he might enter West Point Academy.

Here again there was no romance, and the daily grind wore sadly upon his buoyant and youthful spirits. Once more he displayed the dominant boyish nature by giving vent to his disgust in an extended series of mischievous pranks. He constantly showed a large and growing disregard for the duties imposed by the authorities who considered them almost sacred obligations. Because a military school takes no particular pains to overlook the faults of a genius, young Poe was given a trial and his dismissal followed.

It is most interesting to read into these days a very human story, for surely the desire for gain, even if one must needs outwit his fellows, is entirely human. It happened that Poe's gift of writing had taken the turn of satirical thrusts at his teachers in the Academy. Upon announcing, therefore, a forthcoming volume of verse, he obtained subscriptions from many of his comrades who ever delighted in his humorous sallies. When the book was issued in 1831, the embryonic soldiers displayed considerable disgust, for instead of the personal thrusts of satire which they had expected, the volume contained such exquisite lyrics, as *Lenore* and *To Helen*.

Two years later Poe gained a new literary prominence. This time he displayed a distinct gift in the making of prose tales. With a story called *A Ms. Found in a Bottle* he won an important literary competition, featured by one of the influential daily newspapers of that time. This early effort was not great as a realization but, rather, as a promise of later master works. Certainly it was indicative of his great genius which later found expression in the creation of the American short story. Furthermore, his success in this competition meant for him a new and important friendship. Of influential friends he was in sore need. John P. Kennedy, a judge in the contest, became interested in the young man who had evolved so strange a narrative. This interest and kindness were new factors in shaping the poet's career. To this new friend Poe doubtless owed more than his young

heart or head realized. Through Mr. Kennedy he obtained his first literary position—the editorship of *The Southern Literary Messenger*. This position he shared with the more experienced and puritanical Mr. Thomas W. White who had been in charge for some time. The new editor's ability was unquestioned but his convivial habits greatly tried the patience of his partner. Even to-day one may hear, in and around Richmond, Virginia, many stories of the unfortunate and all too frequent imbibing of an editor-poet who did not know how to fight his worst enemy. These anecdotes of great disgraces, and many others that show a growing melancholy, have come down to us from reliable sources and were not creations of idle gossip.

MATURE LIFE. In the middle of the year 1836, Poe married his cousin Virginia Clemm, a very young girl. About this time he lost his position in Richmond and the two went to New York. The girl's mother went with them and aided the family finances by taking boarders. Poe believed it his duty to strive for a real recognition and his vigor and enthusiasm were commendable. He believed in himself and anticipated prompt financial release by virtue of his efforts.

In 1838 he went to Philadelphia and resided there for the six years following. Here he held two important editorships—that of *The Gentleman's Magazine* and *Graham's*. He was devoted to Virginia, his wife, and his work was hampered by a constant anxiety concerning her physical condition. A broken blood vessel caused her great suffering and his grief and sympathy found expression in the melancholy writing he produced at this time. His gloom heightened his morbid imagination, and the products of his pen, although marvelous in their structure and therefore widely studied to-day, show the ever increasing despair of his heart.

The lure of the large publishing houses took him back to New York in 1844. The first position given him was one with *The Evening Mirror*. A little later he held a similar place on *The Broadway Journal*. Both were of brief duration. And now, working with even freshened zeal, he came in the year 1845 into the literary Promised Land and attained unto his highest art with the publication of *The Raven*, which ap-

peared in a volume with other poems. Nor did his fame linger in his own country but swept across the Atlantic.

But with the literary world now his by right of conquest—what a brilliant battle he had waged!—this poet and weaver of strange tales forgot the glory on his new day as he watched the relentless shadows creeping in upon him—dreary portents of an on-coming night. Virginia's life faded slowly away and the recognition, for which he had fought many years, was lost in the new and overwhelming sorrow. A man of intense passions, he battled as poorly with this personal loss as he had done with his thirst for liquor.

Poe now faced the world utterly alone. Although the years with Virginia had been those of hardship and mad struggle to obtain literary rank and sufficient income to keep up a home, still they had been years of real happiness. With the old life gone, he needed sympathy more than ever before. His brain had been weakened and diseased. Certainly not at his best either morally or physically, he caused to be recorded against him a quick succession of romantic ventures. Possibly the principal one was an endeavor to win again the affection of Mrs. Shelton whom he had considered his sweetheart years before.

It is interesting to know that Poe was able to retain many valuable friendships even during the last miserable months of his life. He was promised a position, if he would straighten up. It is also stated that upon the same condition hung the possibility of a happy life with Mrs. Shelton. To aid in this double accomplishment a great host of loyal friends supported him in a lecturing venture which netted a large sum of money.

Poe's death is still a mystery. It occurred October 7th, 1849. At best, life could have meant only greater suffering, for there was nothing upon which to build a renewed physical and mental life, save a burned-out brain and the remnant of an old love. He had failed to conserve his physical energies and the result was inevitable.

Poe's life seems to contain little that is ennobling. Even his genius is a matter of considerable dispute among his critics. Yet, when all is recorded—both *pro* and *con*—there remains the stubborn fact that he wrought mightily during

years when literary achievement was little more than a mirage. And we find in Edgar Allan Poe the type of self-reliance and determination that has ever and will ever mark the track of the ambitious young American.

POE AS A FRIEND. To the reader who has puzzled over this character there is doubtless the recurring idea that Edgar Allan Poe had few friends. So eccentric, so nomadic, so sensitive, and so uncertain in his behavior—surely with great difficulty could he have retained close associates. Yet oddly enough he did. Some pitied him because of physical or moral weaknesses and became his true friends, although a poet is proverbially said to resent pity. Others recognized him as a genius, and his younger years in Richmond society were those of genuine popularity. His dependence is best shown at the death of Virginia, his wife. And Poe without friends would never have gained more than a passing renown. It was their loyalty that meant practically all his success. In return he rendered back a spirit of real appreciation.

POE AS AN ARTIST. Very little artistry is the voluntary product of the worker. The experienced student knows that to the artist who determines upon a fixed method of execution, there is an almost certain loss of effect. Rigid rules, kept ever before the eyes of the painter or poet, would surely harm the production of either. Poe probably worked with rapidity. Many of his best lyrics appear to be the work of skillful haste. He does with words what Whistler does with the strokes of a brush: he gives us an *impression*—vivid, lasting. He chooses to surround his poems and stories with what the short-story writer of to-day calls, "atmosphere." We say many of his tales seem fairly to "breathe" weirdness or mystery or melancholy. He was the real master of the more modern method of expression called, "suggestive writing." Rather than give the facts, he delights in describing his characters or picturing his scenes by means of *hints*. Handled by a master writer these hints are as convincing as facts.

POE AS A MODEL OF CRAFTSMANSHIP. In a practical summary the question arises: Will a study of Poe's poems and

stories assist one in becoming a better student of literature and a better writer of his mother tongue?

For an answer—Yes. Study Poe's *use of words*. He is a master; more, a wizard. He knows word meanings and sounds better than any other American author. Study Poe's *naturalness of expression*. His work is marked by grace and polish. Study Poe's *picture making*. He has no American rival in this art save Whitman. Study Poe's *ingenuity*. It is conceded to be without parallel in American literature. Study Poe's *command of rhythm*. After close study, see if you find superior rhythm in your favorite poet's best works. Study Poe's *double meanings*. He is symbolic, mystical, fascinating.

Poe is worth all the study for which we can find time. He truly is a model of craftsmanship. With study will come admiration, and the natural outcome of study and admiration is what our learned professors term "scholarship."

POEMS

TO — —

I saw thee on thy bridal day,
When a burning blush came o'er thee,
Though happiness around thee lay,
The world all love before thee:

And in thine eye a kindling light 5
(Whatever it might be)
Was all on Earth my aching sight
Of Loveliness could see.

That blush, perhaps, was maiden shame—
As such it well may pass— 10
Though its glow hath raised a fiercer flame
In the breast of him, alas!

Who saw thee on that bridal day,
When that deep blush would come o'er thee,
Though happiness around thee lay, 15
The world all love before thee.

TO THE RIVER —

Fair river! in thy bright, clear flow
Of crystal, wandering water,
Thou art an emblem of the glow
Of beauty—the unhidden heart—
The playful mazziness of art 5
In old Alberto's daughter;

But when within thy wave she looks—
 Which glistens then, and trembles—
 Why, then, the prettiest of brooks
 Her worshipper resembles; 10
 For in his heart, as in thy stream,
 Her image deeply lies—
 His heart which trembles at the beam
 Of her soul-searching eyes.

TO HELEN

Helen, thy beauty is to me
 Like those Nicæan barks of yore,
 That gently, o'er a perfumed sea,
 The weary, wayworn wanderer bore 5
 To his own native shore.

On desperate seas long wont to roam,
 Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face,
 Thy Naiad airs, have brought me home
 To the glory that was Greece 10
 And the grandeur that was Rome.

Lo! in yon brilliant window-niche
 How statue-like I see thee stand,
 The agate lamp within thy hand!
 Ah, Psyche, from the regions which 15
 Are Holy Land!

THE SLEEPER

At midnight, in the month of June,
 I stand beneath the mystic moon.
 An opiate vapor, dewy, dim,
 Exhales from out her golden rim,
 And, softly dripping, drop by drop, 5

Upon the quiet mountain-top,
 Steals drowsily and musically
 Into the universal valley.
 The rosemary nods upon the grave;
 The lily lolls upon the wave; 10
 Wrapping the fog about its breast,
 The ruin molders into rest;
 Looking like Lethe,ⁿ see! the lake
 A conscious slumber seems to take,
 And would not, for the world, awake. 15
 All beauty sleeps!—and lo! where lies
 Irene, with her destinies!

Oh lady bright! can it be right,
 This window open to the night?
 The wanton airs, from the tree-top, 20
 Laughingly through the lattice drop;
 The bodiless airs, a wizard rout,
 Flit through thy chamber in and out,
 And wave the curtain canopy
 So fitfully, so fearfully, 25
 Above the closed and fringed lid
 'Neath which thy slumb'ring soul lies hid,
 That, o'er the floor and down the wall,
 Like ghosts the shadows rise and fall.
 Oh, lady dear, hast thou no fear? 30
 Why and what art thou dreaming here?
 Sure thou art come o'er far-off seas,
 A wonder to these garden trees!
 Strange is thy pallor! strange thy dress!
 Strange, above all, thy length of tress, 35
 And this all solemn silentness!

The lady sleeps. Oh, may her sleep,
 Which is enduring, so be deep!

A superior ⁿ indicates a note at the end of the volume.

Heaven have her in its sacred keep!
 This chamber changed for one more holy, 40
 This bed for one more melancholy,
 I pray to God that she may lie
 Forever with unopened eye,
 While the dim sheeted ghosts go by!

My love, she sleeps. Oh, may her sleep, 45
 As it is lasting, so be deep!
 Soft may the worms about her creep!
 Far in the forest, dim and old,
 For her may some tall vault unfold—
 Some vault that oft hath flung its black 50
 And wingéd panels fluttering back,
 Triumphant, o'er the crested palls
 Of her grand family funerals—
 Some sepulcher, remote, alone,
 Against whose portal she hath thrown, 55
 In childhood, many an idle stone—
 Some tomb from out whose sounding door
 She ne'er shall force an echo more,
 Thrilling to think, poor child of sin,
 It was the dead who groaned within. 60

LENORE

Ah, broken is the golden bowl! " the spirit flown forever!
 Let the bell toll!—a saintly soul floats on the Stygian " river;
 And, Guy De Vere, hast *thou* no tear?—weep now or never
 more!

See, on yon drear and rigid bier low lies thy love, Lenore!
 Come, let the burial rite be read—the funeral song be sung: 5
 An anthem for the queenliest dead that ever died so young,
 A dirge for her the doubly dead in that she died so young.

"Wretches, ye loved her for her wealth and hated her for her
 pride,

And when she fell in feeble health, ye blessed her—that she
died!

How *shall* the ritual, then, be read? the requiem how be
sung 10

By you—by yours, the evil eye,—by yours, the slanderous
tongue

That did to death the innocence that died, and died so
young?"

Peccavimus;" but rave not thus! and let a Sabbath song

Go up to God so solemnly the dead may feel no wrong.

The sweet Lenore hath gone before, with Hope that flew
beside, 15

Leaving thee wild for the dear child that should have been
thy bride:

For her, the fair and debonair, that now so lowly lies,

The life upon her yellow hair but not within her eyes;

The life still there, upon her hair—the death upon her eyes.

"Avaunt! avaunt! from fiends below, the indignant ghost
is riven— 20

From Hell unto a high estate far up within the Heaven—

From grief and groan, to a golden throne, beside the King
of Heaven!

Let no bell toll, then,—lest her soul, amid its hallowed mirth,
Should catch the note as it doth float up from the damnéd
Earth!

And I!—to-night my heart is light!—no dirge will I upraise,²⁵
But waft the angel on her flight with a pæan of old days."

THE VALLEY OF UNREST

Once it smiled a silent dell

Where the people did not dwell;

They had gone unto the wars,

Trusting to the mild-eyed stars,

Nightly, from their azure towers, 5

To keep watch above the flowers,
 In the midst of which all day
 The red sunlight lazily lay.
 Now each visitor shall confess
 The sad valley's restlessness. 10
 Nothing there is motionless,
 Nothing save the airs that brood
 Over the magic solitude.
 Ah, by no wind are stirred those trees
 That palpitate like the chill seas 15
 Around the misty Hebrides! "
 Ah, by no wind those clouds are driven
 That rustle through the unquiet Heaven
 Uneasily, from morn till even,
 Over the violets there that lie 20
 In myriad types of the human eye,
 Over the lilies there that wave
 And weep above a nameless grave!
 They wave:—from out their fragrant tops
 Eternal dews come down in drops. 25
 They weep:—from off their delicate stems
 Perennial tears descend in gems.

HYMN

At morn—at noon—at twilight dim,
 Maria! thou hast heard my hymn.
 In joy and woe, in good and ill,
 Mother of God, be with me still!
 When the hours flew brightly by, 5
 And not a cloud obscured the sky,
 My soul, lest it should truant be,
 Thy grace did guide to thine and thee.
 Now, when storms of fate o'ercast
 Darkly my Present and my Past, 10
 Let my Future radiant shine
 With sweet hopes of thee and thine!

TO ONE IN PARADISE

Thou wast all that to me, love,
 For which my soul did pine—
 A green isle in the sea, love,
 A fountain and a shrine,
 All wreathed with fairy fruits and flowers, 5
 And all the flowers were mine.

Ah, dream too bright to last!
 Ah, starry Hope! that didst arise
 But to be overcast!
 A voice from out the Future cries, 10
 "On! on!"—but o'er the Past
 (Dim gulf!) my spirit hovering lies
 Mute, motionless, aghast!

For, alas! alas! with me
 The light of Life is o'er! 15
 "No more—no more—no more!—"
 (Such language holds the solemn sea
 To the sands upon the shore)
 Shall bloom the thunder-blasted tree,
 Or the stricken eagle soar! 20

And all my days are trances,
 And all my nightly dreams
 Are where thy dark eye glances,
 And where thy footstèp gleams—
 In what ethereal dances, 25
 By what eternal streams.

TO F—

Beloved! amid the earnest woes
 That crowd around my earthly path—
 (Drear path, alas! where grows

Not even one lonely rose)—

My soul at least a solace hath
In dreams of thee, and therein knows
An Eden of bland repose.

5

And thus thy memory is to me

Like some enchanted far-off isle
In some tumultuous sea—
Some ocean throbbing far and free
With storms—but where meanwhile
Serenest skies continually
Just o'er that one bright island smile.

10

TO ZANTE "

Fair isle, that from the fairest of all flowers

Thy gentlest of all gentle names dost take,

How many memories of what radiant hours

At sight of thee and thine at once awake!

How many scenes of what departed bliss,

How many thoughts of what entombéd hopes,

How many visions of a maiden that is

No more "—no more upon thy verdant slopes!

No more! alas, that magical sad sound

Transforming all! Thy charms shall please no more, 10

Thy memory no more. Accurséd ground!

Henceforth I hold thy flower-enameled shore,

O hyacinthine isle! O purple Zante!

"Isola d'oro! Fior di Levante!" "

5

BRIDAL BALLAD

The ring is on my hand,

And the wreath is on my brow;

Satins and jewels grand

Are all at my command,

And I am happy now.

5

And my lord he loves me well;
 But, when first he breathed his vow,
 I felt my bosom swell,
 For the words rang as a knell,
 And the voice seemed his who fell 10
 In the battle down the dell,
 And who is happy now.

But he spoke to reassure me,
 And he kissed my pallid brow,
 While a reverie came o'er me, 15
 And to the churchyard bore me,
 And I sighed to him before me,
 Thinking him dead D'Elormie,
 "Oh, I am happy now!"

And thus the words were spoken, 20
 And this the plighted vow;
 And, though my faith be broken,
 And, though my heart be broken,
 Behold the golden token
 That proves me happy now! 25

Would God I could awaken!
 For I dream I know not how,
 And my soul is sorely shaken
 Lest an evil step be taken,—
 Lest the dead who is forsaken 30
 May not be happy now.

THE CONQUEROR WORM

Lo! 'tis a gala night
 Within the lonesome latter years.
 An angel throng, bewinged, bedight
 In veils, and drowned in tears,

Sit in a theater to see 5
 A play of hopes and fears,
 While the orchestra breathes fitfully
 The music of the spheres.

Mimes," in the form of God on high,
 Mutter and mumble low, 10
 And hither and thither fly—
 Mere puppets they, who come and go
 At bidding of vast formless things "
 That shift the scenery to and fro,
 Flapping from out their condor wings 15
 Invisible Woe.

That motley drama—oh, be sure
 It shall not be forgot!
 With its Phantom " chased for evermore
 By a crowd that seize it not, 20
 Through a circle that ever returneth in
 To the selfsame spot;
 And much of Madness, and more of Sin
 And Horror the soul of the plot.

But see, amid the mimic rout 25
 A crawling shape intrude!
 A blood-red thing that writhes from out
 The scenic solitude!
 It writhes—it writhes!—with mortal pangs
 The mimes become its food, 30
 And seraphs sob at vermin fangs
 In human gore imbued.

Out—out are the lights—out all!
 And, over each quivering form,
 The curtain, a funeral pall, 35
 Comes down with the rush of a storm,

While the angels, all pallid and wan,
 Uprising, unveiling, affirm
 That the play is the tragedy, "Man,"
 And its hero, the Conqueror Worm.

40

DREAMLAND

By a route obscure and lonely,
 Haunted by ill angels only,
 Where an *Eidolon*,["] named Night,
 On a black throne reigns upright,
 I have reached these lands["] but newly 5
 From an ultimate dim Thule:["]
 From a wild weird clime that lieth, sublime,
 Out of Space—out of Time.
 Bottomless vales and boundless floods,
 And chasms and caves and Titan woods, 10
 With forms that no man can discover
 For the tears that drip all over;
 Mountains toppling evermore
 Into seas without a shore;
 Seas that restlessly aspire, 15
 Surging, unto skies of fire;
 Lakes that endlessly outspread
 Their lone waters, lone and dead,—
 Their still waters, still and chilly
 With the snows of the lolling lily. 20

By the lakes that thus outspread
 Their lone waters, lone and dead,—
 Their sad waters, sad and chilly
 With the snows of the lolling lily;
 By the mountains—near the river 25
 Murmuring lowly, murmuring ever;
 By the gray woods, by the swamp
 Where the toad and the newt encamp;

By the dismal tarns and pools
 Where dwell the Ghouls; " 30
 By each spot the most unholy,
 In each nook most melancholy,—
 There the traveler meets aghast
 Sheeted Memories of the Past:
 Shrouded forms that start and sigh 35
 As they pass the wanderer by,
 White-robed forms of friends long given,
 In agony, to the Earth—and Heaven.

For the heart whose woes are legion
 'Tis a peaceful, soothing region; 40
 For the spirit that walks in shadow
 'Tis—oh, 'tis an Eldorado! "
 But the traveler, traveling through it,
 May not—dare not openly view it;
 Never its mysteries are exposed 45
 To the weak human eye unclosed;
 So wills its King, who hath forbid
 The uplifting of the fringed lid;
 And thus the sad Soul that here passes
 Beholds it but through darkened glasses. 50
 By a route obscure and lonely,
 Haunted by ill angels only,
 Where an Eidolon, named Night,
 On a black throne reigns upright,
 I have wandered home but newly 55
 From this ultimate dim Thule.

THE RAVEN

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and
 weary,
 Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore,—
 While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a
 tapping,

As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.

“’Tis some visitor,” I muttered, “tapping at my chamber door:

Only this and nothing more.”

Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak December,
And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon
the floor.

Eagerly I wished the morrow;—vainly I had sought to borrow
From my books surcease of sorrow—sorrow for the lost
Lenore,

For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name
Lenore:

Nameless here forevermore.

And the silken sad uncertain rustling of each purple curtain
Thrilled me—filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before;
So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood re-
peating

“’Tis some visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door,
Some late visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door:

This it is and nothing more.”

Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitating then no longer,
“Sir,” said I, “or Madam, truly your forgiveness I im-
plore;

But the fact is I was napping, and so gently you came rapping,
And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at my chamber
door,

That I scarce was sure I heard you”—here I opened wide
the door:—

Darkness there and nothing more.

Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wonder-
ing, fearing,

Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to dream
before;

But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness gave no token,
And the only word there spoken was the whispered word,
"Lenore?"

This I whispered, and an echo murmured back the word,
"Lenore:"

Merely this and nothing more. 30

Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within me burning,
Soon again I heard a tapping somewhat louder than before.

"Surely," said I, "surely that is something at my window
lattice;

Let me see, then, what thereat is, and this mystery explore;
Let my heart be still a moment and this mystery explore: 35

'Tis the wind and nothing more."

Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many a flirt and
flutter,

In there stepped a stately Raven" of the saintly days of yore.
Not the least obeisance made he; not a minute stopped or
stayed he;

But, with mien of lord or lady, perched above my chamber
door, 40

Perched upon a bust of Pallas" just above my chamber door:

Perched, and sat, and nothing more.

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling
By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore,—

"Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou," I said, "art
sure no craven, 45

Ghastly grim and ancient Raven wandering from the Nightly
shore:

Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night's Plutonian
shore!"

Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

Much I marveled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse so
 plainly,
 Though its answer little meaning—little relevancy bore; 50
 For we cannot help agreeing that no living human being
 Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above his chamber door,
 Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his chamber
 door,

With such name as "Nevermore."

But the Raven, sitting lonely on the placid bust, spoke only 55
 That one word, as if his soul in that one word he did outpour,
 Nothing further then he uttered, not a feather then he fluttered,
 Till I scarcely more than muttered,—“Other friends have
 flown before;
 On the morrow *he* will leave me, as my Hopes have flown
 before.”

Then the bird said, “Nevermore.” 60

Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly spoken,
 “Doubtless,” said I, “what it utters is its only stock and
 store,
 Caught from some unhappy master whom unmerciful Disaster
 Followed fast and followed faster till his songs one burden
 bore:
 Till the dirges of his Hope that melancholy burden bore 65
 Of ‘Never—nevermore.’”

But the Raven still beguiling all my fancy into smiling,
 Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of bird and bust
 and door;

Then, upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself to linking
 Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous bird of yore, 70
 What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and ominous bird
 of yore

Meant in croaking “Nevermore.”

This I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable expressing
 To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned into my bosom's
 core; 74

This and more I sat divining, with my head at ease reclining
 On the cushion's velvet lining that the lamplight gloated o'er,
 But whose velvet violet lining with the lamplight gloating
 o'er

She shall press, ah, nevermore!

Then, methought, the air grew denser, perfumed from an
 unseen censer

Swung by seraphim " whose footfalls tinkled on the tufted
 floor. 80

"Wretch," " I cried, "thy God hath lent thee—by these
 angels he hath sent thee

Respite—respite and nepenthe " from thy memories of Len-
 ore!

Quaff, oh quaff this kind nepenthe, and forget this lost Len-
 ore!"

Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

"Prophet!" " said I, "thing of evil! prophet still, if bird or
 devil! 85

Whether Tempter sent, or whether tempest tossed thee here
 ashore,

Desolate yet all undaunted, on this desert land enchanted—
 On this home by Horror haunted—tell me truly, I implore:

Is there—is there balm in Gilead?"—tell me—tell me, I im-
 plore!"

Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore." 90

"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil—prophet still, if bird or
 devil!

By that Heaven that bends above us, by that God we both
 adore,

Tell this soul with sorrow laden if, within the distant Aidenn,

It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name
Lenore:

Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name
Lenore!"

95

Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

"Be that word our sign of parting, bird or fiend!" I shrieked,
upstarting:

"Get thee back into the tempest and the Night's Plutonian
shore!

Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy soul hath
spoken!

Leave my loneliness unbroken! quit the bust above my
door!

100

Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from
off my door!"

Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting
On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door;

And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's that is dream-
ing,

105

And the lamplight o'er him streaming throws his shadow
on the floor;

And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on
the floor

Shall be lifted—nevermore.

EULALIE

I dwelt alone

In a world of moan,

And my soul was a stagnant tide,

Till the fair and gentle Eulalie became my blushing bride,

Till the yellow-haired young Eulalie became my smiling
bride.

5

Ah, less—less bright
 The stars of the night
 Than the eyes of the radiant girl!
 And never a flake
 That the vapor can make 10
 With the moon-tints of purple and pearl
 Can vie with the modest Eulalie's most unregarded curl,
 Can compare with the bright-eyed Eulalie's most humble and
 careless curl.

Now doubt—now pain
 Come never again, 15
 For her soul gives me sigh for sigh;
 And all day long
 Shines, bright and strong,
 Astarte " within the sky,
 While ever to her dear Eulalie upturns her matron eye, 20
 While ever to her young Eulalie upturns her violet eye.

ULALUME

The skies they were ashen and sober;
 The leaves they were crispéd and sere,
 The leaves they were withering and sere;
 It was night in the lonesome October
 Of my most immemorial year; 5
 It was hard by the dim lake of Auber,"
 In the misty mid region of Weir: "
 It was down by the dank tarn of Auber,
 In the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.

Here once, through an alley Titanic 10
 Of cypress, I roamed with my Soul—
 Of cypress, with Psyche, my Soul.
 These were days when my heart was volcanic
 As the scoriac " rivers that roll,
 As the lavas that restlessly roll 15

Their sulphurous currents down Yaanek "
 In the ultimate climes of the pole,
 That groan as they roll down Mount Yaanek
 In the realms of the boreal pole.

Our talk had been serious and sober, 20
 But our thoughts they were palsied and sere,
 Our memories were treacherous and sere,
 For we knew not the month was October,
 And we marked not the night of the year,
 (Ah, night of all nights in the year!) 25
 We noted not the dim lake of Auber
 (Though once we had journeyed down here),
 Remembered not the dank tarn of Auber
 Nor the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.

And now, as the night was senescent 30
 And star-dials pointed to morn,
 As the star-dials hinted of morn,
 At the end of our path a liquescent
 And nebulous luster was born,
 Out of which a miraculous crescent 35
 Arose, with a duplicate horn,
 Astarte's " bediamonded crescent
 Distinct with its duplicate horn.

And I said—"She is warmer than Dian ":
 She rolls through an ether of sighs— 40
 She revels in a region of sighs:
 She has seen that the tears are not dry on
 These cheeks, where the worm never dies,
 And has come past the stars of the Lion "
 To point us the path to the skies— 45
 To the Lethean " peace of the skies—
 Come up, in despite of the Lion,
 To shine on us with her bright eyes—
 Come up through the lair of the Lion,
 With love in her luminous eyes." 50

But Psyche, uplifting her finger,
 Said—"Sadly this star I mistrust,
 Her pallor I strangely mistrust:
 Oh, hasten!—oh, let us not linger!
 Oh, fly!—let us fly!—for we must." 55
 In terror she spoke, letting sink her
 Wings until they trailed in the dust;
 In agony sobbed, letting sink her
 Plumes till they trailed in the dust,
 Till they sorrowfully trailed in the dust. 60
 I replied—"This is nothing but dreaming:
 Let us on by this tremulous light!
 Let us bathe in this crystalline light!
 Its sibyllic "splendor is beaming
 With hope and in beauty to-night: 65
 See, it flickers up the sky through the night!
 Ah, we safely may trust to its gleaming,
 And be sure it will lead us aright:
 We safely may trust to a gleaming
 That cannot but guide us aright, 70
 Since it flickers up to Heaven through the night."
 Thus I pacified Psyche and kissed her,
 And tempted her out of her gloom,
 And conquered her scruples and gloom;
 And we passed to the end of the vista, 75
 But were stopped by the door of a tomb,
 By the door of a legended tomb;
 And I said—"What is written, sweet sister,
 On the door of this legended tomb?"
 She replied—"Ulalume—Ulalume— 80
 'Tis the vault of thy lost Ulalume!"
 Then my heart it grew ashen and sober
 As the leaves that were crispéd and sere,
 As the leaves that were withering and sere,
 And I cried—"It was surely October 85

On this very night of last year
 That I journeyed—I journeyed down here,
 That I brought a dread burden down here:
 On this night of all nights in the year,
 Ah, what demon has tempted me here? 90
 Well I know, now, this dim lake of Auber,
 This misty mid region of Weir:
 Well I know, now, this dank tarn of Auber,
 This ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.”

TO HELEN

I saw thee once—once only—years ago:
 I must not say how many—but not many.
 It was a July midnight; and from out
 A full-orbed moon, that, like thine own soul, soaring,
 Sought a precipitate pathway up through heaven, 5
 There fell a silvery-silken veil of light,
 With quietude, and sultriness, and slumber,
 Upon the upturn'd faces of a thousand
 Roses that grew in an enchanted garden,
 Where no winds dared to stir, unless on tiptoe— 10
 Fell on the upturn'd faces of these roses
 That gave out, in return for the love-light,
 Their odorous souls in an ecstatic death—
 Fell on the upturn'd faces of these roses
 That smiled and died in this parterre, enchanted 15
 By thee, and by the poetry of thy presence.

Clad all in white, upon a violet bank
 I saw thee half reclining; while the moon
 Fell on the upturn'd faces of the roses,
 And on thine own, upturn'd—alas, in sorrow! 20

Was it not Fate, that, on this July midnight—
 Was it not Fate, (whose name is also Sorrow,)

That bade me pause before that garden gate,
 To breathe the incense of those slumbering roses?
 No footsteps stirred: the hated world all slept, 25
 Save only thee and me. (Oh, Heaven!—oh, God!
 How my heart beats in coupling those two words!)
 Save only thee and me. I paused—I looked—
 And in an instant all things disappeared.
 (Ah, bear in mind this garden was enchanted!) 30
 The pearly luster of the moon went out:
 The mossy banks and the meandering paths,
 The happy flowers and the repining trees,
 Were seen no more: the very roses' odors
 Died in the arms of the adoring airs. 35
 All, all expired save thee—save less than thou:
 Save only the divine light in thine eyes,
 Save but the soul in thine uplifted eyes:
 I saw but them—they were the world to me:
 I saw but them, saw only them for hours, 40
 Saw only them until the moon went down.
 What wild heart-histories seem to lie enwritten
 Upon those crystalline, celestial spheres;
 How dark a woe, yet how sublime a hope;
 How silently serene a sea of pride; 45
 How daring an ambition; yet how deep,
 How fathomless a capacity for love!

But now, at length, dear Dian sank from sight,
 Into a western couch of thundercloud;
 And thou, a ghost, amid the entombing trees 50
 Didst glide away. Only thine eyes remained:
 They would not go—they never yet have gone;
 Lighting my lonely pathway home that night,
 They have not left me (as my hopes have) since;
 They follow me—they lead me through the years; 55
 They are my ministers—yet I their slave;
 Their office is to illumine and enkindle—

My duty, to be saved by their bright light,
 And purified in their electric fire,
 And sanctified in their elysian fire, 60
 They fill my soul with beauty (which is hope),
 And are, far up in Heaven, the stars I kneel to
 In the sad, silent watches of my night;
 While even in the meridian glare of day
 I see them still—two sweetly scintillant 65
 Venuses, unextinguished by the sun.

FOR ANNIE

Thank Heaven! the crisis,
 The danger, is past,
 And the lingering illness
 Is over at last—
 And the fever called "Living" 5
 Is conquered at last.

Sadly I know
 I am shorn of my strength,
 And no muscle I move
 As I lie at full length— 10
 But no matter!—I feel
 I am better at length.

And I rest so composedly
 Now, in my bed,
 That any beholder 15
 Might fancy me dead,
 Might start at beholding me,
 Thinking me dead.

The moaning and groaning,
 The sighing and sobbing, 20
 Are quieted now,

With that horrible throbbing
 At heart:—ah, that horrible,
 Horrible throbbing!

The sickness, the nausea, 25
 The pitiless pain,
 Have ceased, with the fever
 That maddened my brain,
 With the fever called "Living"
 That burned in my brain. 30

And oh! of all tortures,
 That torture the worst
 Has abated—the terrible
 Torture of thirst 35
 For the naphthaline " river
 Of Passion accurst:
 I have drank of a water
 That quenches all thirst:

Of a water that flows,
 With a lullaby sound, 40
 From a spring but a very few
 Feet under ground,
 From a cavern not very far
 Down under ground.

And ah! let it never 45
 Be foolishly said
 That my room it is gloomy,
 And narrow my bed;
 For man never slept
 In a different bed: 50
 And, *to sleep*, you must slumber
 In just such a bed.

My tantalized spirit
 Here blandly reposes,
 Forgetting, or never
 55 Regretting, its roses:
 Its old agitations
 Of myrtles " and roses; "

For now, while so quietly
 Lying, it fancies
 60 A holier odor
 About it, of pansies: "
 A rosemary " odor,
 Commingled with pansies,
 With rue " and the beautiful
 65 Puritan pansies.

And so it lies happily,
 Bathing in many
 A dream of the truth
 And the beauty of Annie,
 70 Drowned in a bath
 Of the tresses of Annie.

She tenderly kissed me,
 She fondly caressed,
 And then I fell gently
 75 To sleep on her breast—
 Deeply to sleep
 From the heaven of her breast.

When the light was extinguished,
 She covered me warm,
 80 And she prayed to the angels
 To keep me from harm—
 To the queen of the angels
 To shield me from harm.

And I lie so composedly, 85
 Now, in my bed,
 (Knowing her love)
 That you fancy me dead—
 And I rest so contentedly
 Now, in my bed, 90
 (With her love at my breast)
 That you fancy me dead—
 That you shudder to look at me,
 Thinking me dead:

But my heart it is brighter 95
 Than all of the many
 Stars in the sky,
 For it sparkles with Annie—
 It glows with the light
 Of the love of my Annie— 100
 With the thought of the light
 Of the eyes of my Annie.

THE BELLS

I

Hear the sledges with the bells,
 Silver bells!
 What a world of merriment their melody foretells!
 How they tinkle, tinkle, tinkle,
 In the icy air of night! 5
 While the stars that oversprinkle
 All the heavens seem to twinkle
 With a crystalline delight;
 Keeping time, time, time,
 In a sort of Runic " rime, 10
 To the tintinnabulation that so musically wells
 From the bells, bells, bells, bells,
 Bells, bells, bells—
 From the jingling and the tinkling of the bells.

II

- Hear the mellow wedding bells—
 Golden bells! 15
- What a world of happiness their harmony foretells!
 Through the balmy air of night
 How they ring out their delight!
 From the molten-golden notes, 20
 And all in tune,
 What a liquid ditty floats
 To the turtle-dove that listens, while she gloats
 On the moon!
- Oh, from out the sounding cells, 25
 What a gush of euphony voluminously wells!
 How it swells!
 How it dwells
 On the Future! how it tells
 Of the rapture that impels 30
 To the swinging and the ringing
 Of the bells, bells, bells,
 Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,
 Bells, bells, bells—
- To the ringing and the chiming of the bells! 35

III

- Hear the loud alarum bells—
 Brazen bells!
- What a tale of terror, now, their turbulency tells!
 In the startled ear of night
 How they scream out their affright! 40
 Too much horrified to speak,
 They can only shriek, shriek,
 Out of tune,
 In a clamorous appealing to the mercy of the fire,
 In a mad expostulation with the deaf and frantic fire, 45
 Leaping higher, higher, higher,
 With a desperate desire,

And a resolute endeavor
 Now—now to sit or never,
 By the side of the pale-faced moon. 50
 Oh, the bells, bells, bells!
 What a tale their terror tells
 Of Despair!
 How they clang, and clash, and roar!
 What a horror they outpour 55
 On the bosom of the palpitating air!
 Yet the ear it fully knows,
 By the twanging
 And the clanging,
 How the danger ebbs and flows; 60
 Yet the ear distinctly tells,
 In the jangling
 And the wrangling,
 How the danger sinks and swells,—
 By the sinking or the swelling in the anger of the bells, 65
 Of the bells,
 Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,
 Bells, bells, bells—
 In the clamor and the clangor of the bells!

IV

Hear the tolling of the bells, 70
 Iron bells!
 What a world of solemn thought their monody compels!
 In the silence of the night
 How we shiver with affright
 At the melancholy menace of their tone! 75
 For every sound that floats
 From the rust within their throats
 Is a groan.
 And the people—ah, the people,
 They that dwell up in the steeple, 80
 All alone,

And who tolling, tolling, tolling
 In that muffled monotone,
 Feel a glory in so rolling
 On the human heart a stone—
 They are neither man nor woman,
 They are neither brute nor human,
 They are Ghouls:
 And their king it is who tolls;
 And he rolls, rolls, rolls,
 Rolls

85

90

A pæan from the bells;
 And his merry bosom swells
 With the pæan of the bells,
 And he dances, and he yells:
 Keeping time, time, time,
 In a sort of Runic rime,
 To the pæan of the bells,
 Of the bells:

95

Keeping time, time, time,
 In a sort of Runic rime,
 To the throbbing of the bells,
 Of the bells, bells, bells—

100

To the sobbing of the bells;
 Keeping time, time, time,
 As he knells, knells, knells,

105

In a happy Runic rime,
 To the rolling of the bells—
 Of the bells, bells, bells,—

To the tolling of the bells—

110

Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,
 Bells, bells, bells—

To the moaning and the groaning of the bells.

ANNABEL LEE

It was many and many a year ago,
 In a kingdom by the sea,
 That a maiden there lived whom you may know
 By the name of Annabel Lee;
 And this maiden she lived with no other thought 5
 Than to love and be loved by me.

I was a child and she was a child,
 In this kingdom by the sea,
 But we loved with a love that was more than love,
 I and my Annabel Lee; 10
 With a love that the wingéd seraphs of heaven
 Coveted her and me.

And this was the reason that, long ago,
 In this kingdom by the sea,
 A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling 15
 My beautiful Annabel Lee;
 So that her highborn kinsmen came
 And bore her away from me,
 To shut her up in a sepulcher
 In this kingdom by the sea. 20

The angels, not half so happy in heaven,
 Went envying her and me;
 Yes! that was the reason (as all men know,
 In this kingdom by the sea)
 That the wind came out of the cloud by night, 25
 Chilling and killing my Annabel Lee.

But our love it was stronger by far than the love
 Of those who were older than we,
 Of many far wiser than we;
 And neither the angels in heaven above, 30

Nor the demons down under the sea,
 Can ever dissever my soul from the soul
 Of the beautiful Annabel Lee:

For the moon never beams, without bringing me dreams
 Of the beautiful Annabel Lee; 35
 And the stars never rise, but I feel the bright eyes
 Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
 And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side
 Of my darling—my darling—my life and my bride,
 In her sepulcher there by the sea, 40
 In her tomb by the sounding sea.

TO MY MOTHER

Because I feel that, in the Heavens above,
 The angels, whispering to one another,
 Can find, among their burning terms of love,
 None so devotional as that of "Mother,"
 Therefore by that dear name I long have called you— 5
 You who are more than mother unto me,
 And fill my heart of hearts where death installed you,
 In setting my Virginia's spirit free.
 My mother—my own mother, who died early,
 Was but the mother of myself; but you 10
 Are mother to the one I love so dearly,
 And thus are dearer than the mother I knew
 By that infinity with which my wife
 Was dearer to my soul than its soul-life.

ELDORADO

Gaily bedight,
 A gallant knight,
 In sunshine and in shadow,

Had journeyed long,
Singing a song, 5
In search of Eldorado.

But he grew old—
This knight so bold—
And o'er his heart a shadow
Fell as he found 10
No spot of ground
That looked like Eldorado.

And, as his strength
Failed him at length,
He met a pilgrim shadow— 15
“Shadow,” said he,
“Where can it be—
This land of Eldorado?”

“Over the Mountains
Of the Moon, 20
Down the Valley of the Shadow,
Ride, boldly ride,”
The shade replied,—
“If you seek for Eldorado!”

TALES

THE ASSIGNATION

Stay for me there! I will not fail
To meet thee in that hollow vale.

HENRY KING, BISHOP OF CHICHESTER: *The Exequy.*

ILL-FATED and mysterious man! bewildered in the brilliancy of thine own imagination, and fallen in the flames of thine own youth! Again in fancy I behold thee! Once more thy form hath risen before me!—not—oh, not as thou art—in the cold valley and shadow—but as thou *shouldst be*—squandering away a life of magnificent meditation in that city of dim visions, thine own Venice—which is a star-beloved Elysium of the sea, and the wide windows of whose Palladian palaces look down with a deep and bitter meaning upon the secrets of her silent waters. Yes! I repeat it—as thou *shouldst be*. There are surely other worlds than this: other thoughts than the thoughts of the multitude, other speculations than the speculations of the sophist. Who then shall call thy conduct into question? who blame thee for thy visionary hours, or denounce those occupations as a wasting away of life, which were but the overflowings of thine everlasting energies?

It was at Venice, beneath the covered archway there called the *Ponte di Sospiri*, that I met for the third or fourth time the person of whom I speak. It is with a confused recollection that I bring to mind the circumstances of that meeting. Yet I remember—ah! how should I forget?—the deep midnight, the Bridge of Sighs, the beauty of woman, and the Genius of Romance that stalked up and down the narrow canal.

It was a night of unusual gloom. The great clock of the Piazza had sounded the fifth hour of the Italian evening. The square of the Campanile lay silent and deserted, and the lights in the old Ducal Palace were dying fast away. I was returning home from the Piazzetta, by way of the Grand Canal. But as my gondola arrived opposite the mouth of the canal San Marco, a female voice from its recesses broke suddenly upon the night, in one wild, hysterical, and long-continued shriek. Startled at the sound, I sprang upon my feet, while the gondolier, letting slip his single oar, lost it in the pitchy darkness beyond a chance of recovery, and we were consequently left to the guidance of the current which here sets from the greater into the smaller channel. Like some huge and sable-feathered condor, we were slowly drifting down towards the Bridge of Sighs, when a thousand flambeaus flashing from the windows, and down the staircases of the Ducal Palace, turned all at once that deep gloom into a livid and preternatural day.

A child, slipping from the arms of its own mother, had fallen from an upper window of the lofty structure into the deep and dim canal. The quiet waters had closed placidly over their victim; and, although my own gondola was the only one in sight, many a stout swimmer, already in the stream, was seeking in vain upon the surface the treasure which was to be found, alas! only within the abyss. Upon the broad black marble flagstones at the entrance of the palace and a few steps above the water, stood a figure which none who then saw can have ever since forgotten. It was the Marchesa Aphrodite—the adoration of all Venice—the gayest of the gay—the most lovely where all were beautiful—but still the young wife of the old and intriguing Mentoni, and the mother of that fair child, her first and only one, who now, deep beneath the murky water, was thinking in bitterness of heart upon her sweet caresses, and exhausting its little life in struggles to call upon her name.

She stood alone. Her small, bare, and silvery feet gleamed

in the black mirror of marble beneath her. Her hair, not as yet more than half loosened for the night from its ballroom array, clustered, amid a shower of diamonds, round and round her classical head, in curls like those of the young hyacinth. A snowy-white and gauze-like drapery seemed to be nearly the sole covering to her delicate form; but the midsummer and midnight air was hot, sullen, and still, and no motion in the statue-like form itself stirred even the folds of that raiment of very vapor which hung around it as the heavy marble hangs around the Niobe. Yet, strange to say, her large lustrous eyes were not turned downwards upon that grave wherein her brightest hope lay buried—but riveted in a widely different direction! The prison of the Old Republic, is, I think, the stateliest building in all Venice, but how could that lady gaze so fixedly upon it, when beneath her lay stifling her only child? Yon dark, gloomy niche, too, yawns right opposite her chamber window—what, then, *could* there be in its shadows, in its architecture, in its ivy-wreathed and solemn cornices, that the Marchesa di Mentoni had not wondered at a thousand times before? Nonsense! Who does not remember that, at such a time as this, the eye, like a shattered mirror, multiplies the images of its sorrow, and sees in innumerable far-off places the woe which is close at hand?

Many steps above the Marchesa, and within the arch of the water gate, stood, in full dress, the satyr-like figure of Mentoni himself. He was occasionally occupied in thrumming a guitar, and seemed *ennuyé* to the very death as at intervals he gave directions for the recovery of his child. Stupefied and aghast, I had myself no power to move from the upright position I had assumed upon first hearing the shriek, and must have presented to the eyes of the agitated group a spectral and ominous appearance, as with pale countenance and rigid limbs I floated down among them in that funereal gondola.

All efforts proved in vain. Many of the most energetic

in the search were relaxing their exertions, and yielding to a gloomy sorrow. There seemed but little hope for the child (how much less then for the mother!); but now, from the interior of that dark niche which has been already mentioned as forming a part of the Old Republican prison, and as fronting the lattice of the Marchesa, a figure muffled in a cloak stepped out within reach of the light, and, pausing a moment upon the verge of the giddy descent, plunged headlong into the canal. As in an instant afterwards he stood, with the still living and breathing child within his grasp, upon the marble flagstones by the side of the Marchesa, his cloak, heavy with the drenching water, became unfastened, and, falling in folds about his feet, discovered to the wonder-stricken spectators the graceful person of a very young man, with the sound of whose name the greater part of Europe was then ringing.

No word spoke the deliverer. But the Marchesa! She will now receive her child—she will press it to her heart—she will cling to its little form, and smother it with her caresses. Alas! *another's* arms have taken it from the stranger—*another's* arms have taken it away and borne it afar off, unnoticed, into the palace! And the Marchesa! Her lip—her beautiful lip trembles; tears are gathering in her eyes—those eyes which, like Pliny's acanthus, are “soft and almost liquid.” Yes, tears are gathering in those eyes—and see! the entire woman thrills throughout the soul, and the statue has started into life! The pallor of the marble countenance, the swelling of the marble bosom, the very purity of the marble feet, we behold suddenly flushed over with a tide of ungovernable crimson; and a slight shudder quivers about her delicate frame, as a gentle air at Napoli about the rich silver lilies in the grass.

Why *should* that lady blush? To this demand there is no answer—except that, having left, in the eager haste and terror of a mother's heart, the privacy of her own boudoir, she has neglected to enthrall her tiny feet in their slippers, and utterly forgotten to throw over her Venetian shoulders

that drapery which is their due. What other possible reason could there have been for her so blushing?—for the glance of those wild appealing eyes? for the unusual tumult of that throbbing bosom? for the convulsive pressure of that trembling hand—that hand which fell, as Mentoni turned into the palace, accidentally upon the hand of the stranger? What reason could there have been for the low—the singularly low tone of those unmeaning words which the lady uttered hurriedly in bidding him adieu? “Thou hast conquered,” she said, or the murmurs of the water deceived me; “thou hast conquered—one hour after sunrise—we shall meet—so let it be!”

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The tumult had subsided, the lights had died away within the palace, and the stranger, whom I now recognized, stood alone upon the flags. He shook with inconceivable agitation, and his eye glanced around in search of a gondola. I could not do less than offer him the service of my own; and he accepted the civility. Having obtained an oar at the water gate, we proceeded together to his residence, while he rapidly recovered his self-possession, and spoke of our former slight acquaintance in terms of great apparent cordiality.

There are some subjects upon which I take pleasure in being minute. The person of the stranger—let me call him by this title, who to all the world was still a stranger—the person of the stranger is one of these subjects. In height he might have been below rather than above the medium size; although there were moments of intense passion when his frame actually *expanded* and belied the assertion. The light, almost slender, symmetry of his figure promised more of that ready activity which he evinced at the Bridge of Sighs, than of that Herculean strength which he has been known to wield without an effort, upon occasions of more dangerous emergency. With the mouth and chin of a deity—singular, wild, full, liquid eyes, whose shadows varied from pure hazel to

intense and brilliant jet—and a profusion of curling, black hair, from which a forehead of unusual breadth gleamed forth at intervals all light and ivory—his were features than which I have seen none more classically regular, except, perhaps, the marble ones of the Emperor Commodus. Yet his countenance was, nevertheless, one of those which all men have seen at some period of their lives, and have never afterwards seen again. It had no peculiar—it had no settled predominant expression to be fastened upon the memory; a countenance seen and instantly forgotten, but forgotten with a vague and never-ceasing desire of recalling it to mind. Not that the spirit of each rapid passion failed, at any time, to throw its own distinct image upon the mirror of that face; but that the mirror, mirror-like, retained no vestige of the passion, when the passion had departed.

Upon leaving him on the night of our adventure, he solicited me, in what I thought an urgent manner, to call upon him *very* early the next morning. Shortly after sunrise I found myself accordingly at his Palazzo, one of those huge structures of gloomy, yet fantastic pomp, which tower above the waters of the Grand Canal in the vicinity of the Rialto. I was shown up a broad winding staircase of mosaics into an apartment whose unparalleled splendor burst through the opening door with an actual glare, making me blind and dizzy with luxuriousness.

I knew my acquaintance to be wealthy. Report had spoken of his possessions in terms which I had even ventured to call terms of ridiculous exaggeration. But as I gazed about me, I could not bring myself to believe that the wealth of any subject in Europe could have supplied the princely magnificence which burned and blazed around.

Although, as I say, the sun had arisen, yet the room was still brilliantly lighted up. I judged from this circumstance, as well as from an air of exhaustion in the countenance of my friend, that he had not retired to bed during the whole of the preceding night. In the architecture and embellish-

ments of the chamber the evident design had been to dazzle and astound. Little attention had been paid to the *decora* of what is technically called *keeping*, or to the proprieties of nationality. The eye wandered from object to object, and rested upon none—neither the grotesques of the Greek painters, nor the sculptures of the best Italian days, nor the huge carvings of untutored Egypt. Rich draperies in every part of the room trembled to the vibration of low, melancholy music, whose origin was not to be discovered. The senses were oppressed by mingled and conflicting perfumes, reeking up from strange convolute censers, together with multitudinous flaring and flickering tongues of emerald and violet fire. The rays of the newly risen sun poured in upon the whole, through windows, formed each of a single pane of crimson-tinted glass. Glancing to and fro in a thousand reflections, from curtains which rolled from their cornices like cataracts of molten silver, the beams of natural glory mingled at length fitfully with the artificial light, and lay weltering in subdued masses upon a carpet of rich, liquid-looking cloth of Chile gold.

“Ha! ha! ha!—ha! ha! ha!”—laughed the proprietor, motioning me to a seat as I entered the room, and throwing himself back at full length upon an ottoman. “I see,” said he, perceiving that I could not immediately reconcile myself to the *bienséance* of so singular a welcome—“I see you are astonished at my apartment—at my statues—my pictures—my originality of conception in architecture and upholstery! absolutely drunk, eh, with my magnificence? But pardon me, my dear sir” (here his tone of voice dropped to the very spirit of cordiality), “pardon me for my uncharitable laughter. You appeared so *utterly* astonished. Besides, some things are so completely ludicrous that a man *must* laugh, or die. To die laughing must be the most glorious of all glorious deaths! Sir Thomas More”—a very fine man was Sir Thomas More—Sir Thomas More died laughing, you remember. Also in the *Absurdities* of Ravisius Textor there is a long list of charac-

ters who came to the same magnificent end. Do you know, however," continued he, musingly, "that at Sparta—which is now Palæochori—at Sparta, I say, to the west of the citadel, among a chaos of scarcely visible ruins, is a kind of *socle* upon which are still legible the letters ΛΑΣΜ. They are undoubtedly part of ΓΕΛΑΣΜΑ.¹ Now, at Sparta were a thousand temples and shrines to a thousand different divinities. How exceedingly strange that the altar of Laughter should have survived all the others! But in the present instance," he resumed, with a singular alteration of voice and manner, "I have no right to be merry at your expense. You might well have been amazed. Europe cannot produce anything so fine as this, my little regal cabinet. My other apartments are by no means of the same order—mere *ultras* of fashionable insipidity. This is better than fashion, is it not? Yet this has but to be seen to become the rage—that is, with those who could afford it at the cost of their entire patrimony. I have guarded, however, against any such profanation. With one exception you are the only human being, besides myself and my valet, who has been admitted within the mysteries of these imperial precincts, since they have been bedizened as you see!"

I bowed in acknowledgment: for the overpowering sense of splendor and perfume and music, together with the unexpected eccentricity of his address and manner, prevented me from expressing, in words, my appreciation of what I might have construed into a compliment.

"Here," he resumed, arising and leaning on my arm as he sauntered around the apartment,—“here are paintings from the Greeks to Cimabue,” and from Cimabue to the present hour. Many are chosen, as you see, with little deference to the opinions of Virtu. They are all, however, fitting tapestry for a chamber such as this. Here, too, are some *chefs d'œuvre*² of the unknown great; and here, unfinished designs by men, celebrated in their day, whose very names

¹ Laughter.

² Principal works.

the perspicacity of the academies has left to silence and to me. What think you," said he, turning abruptly as he spoke—"what think you of this Madonna della Pietà?"

"It is Guido's own!" I said, with all the enthusiasm of my nature, for I had been poring intently over its surpassing loveliness. "It is Guido's own!—how *could* you have obtained it? she is undoubtedly in painting what the Venus is in sculpture."

"Ha!" said he, thoughtfully, "the Venus—the beautiful Venus?—the Venus of the Medici?—she of the diminutive head and the gilded hair? Part of the left arm," (here his voice dropped so as to be heard with difficulty) "and all the right, are restorations; and in the coquetry of that right arm lies, I think, the quintessence of all affectation. Give *me* the Canova!" The Apollo, too, is a copy—there can be no doubt of it—blind fool that I am, who cannot behold the boasted inspiration of the Apollo! I cannot help—pity me!—I cannot help preferring the Antinous. Was it not Socrates¹ who said that the statuary found his statue in the block of marble? Then Michelangelo² was by no means original in his couplet—

‘Non ha l’ottimo artista alcun concetto
Chè un marmo solo in se non circonscriva.’”ⁿ

It has been or should be remarked that, in the manner of the true gentleman, we are always aware of a difference from the bearing of the vulgar, without being at once precisely able to determine in what such difference consists. Allowing the remark to have applied in its full force to the outward demeanor of my acquaintance, I felt it, on that eventful morning, still more fully applicable to his moral temperament and character. Nor can I better define that peculiarity of spirit which seemed to place him so essentially apart from all other human beings, than by calling it a *habit* of intense and continual thought, pervading even his most

¹ A famous Greek philosopher.

² The best known Italian sculptor.

trivial actions, intruding upon his moments of dalliance, and interweaving itself with his very flashes of merriment, like adders which writhe from out the eyes of the grinning masks in the cornices around the temples of Persepolis.¹

I could not help, however, repeatedly observing, through the mingled tone of levity and solemnity with which he rapidly descanted upon matters of little importance, a certain air of trepidation—a degree of nervous *unction* in action and in speech—an unquiet excitability of manner which appeared to me at all times unaccountable, and upon some occasions even filled me with alarm. Frequently, too, pausing in the middle of a sentence whose commencement he had apparently forgotten, he seemed to be listening in the deepest attention, as if either in momentary expectation of a visitor, or to sounds which must have had existence in his imagination alone.

It was during one of these reveries or pauses of apparent abstraction, that, in turning over a page of the poet and scholar Politian'sⁿ beautiful tragedy, the *Orfeo* (the first native Italian tragedy), which lay near me upon an ottoman, I discovered a passage underlined in pencil. It was a passage towards the end of the third act—a passage of the most heart-stirring excitement—a passage which, although tainted with impurity, no man shall read without a thrill of novel emotion, no woman without a sigh. The whole page was blotted with fresh tears; and upon the opposite interleaf were the following English lines, written in a hand so very different from the peculiar characters of my acquaintance that I had some difficulty in recognizing it as his own:—

Thou wast all that to me, love,
 For which my soul did pine:
 A green isle in the sea, love,
 A fountain and a shrine
 All wreathed with fairy fruits and flowers,
 And all the flowers were mine.

¹ Capital of ancient Persia.

Ah, dream too bright to last!

Ah, starry Hope, that didst arise
But to be overcast!

A voice from out the Future cries,
"On! On!"—but o'er the Past
(Dim gulf!) my spirit hovering lies
Mute—motionless—aghast.

For alas! alas! with me

The light of Life is o'er.

"No more—no more—no more;"—
(Such language holds the solemn sea
To the sands upon the shore)
Shall bloom the thunder-blasted tree,
Or the stricken eagle soar.

Now all my hours are trances,

And all my nightly dreams

Are where thy gray eye glances,

And where thy footstep gleams,

In what ethereal dances,

By what Italian streams.

Alas! for that accursed time

They bore thee o'er the billow,

From Love to titled age and crime,

And an unholy pillow:

From me, and from our misty clime

Where weeps the silver willow.

That these lines were written in English, a language with which I had not believed their author acquainted, afforded me little matter for surprise. I was too well aware of the extent of his acquirements, and of the singular pleasure he took in concealing them from observation, to be astonished

at any similar discovery; but the place of date, I must confess, occasioned me no little amazement. It had been originally written *London*, and afterwards carefully overscored—not, however, so effectually as to conceal the word from a scrutinizing eye. I say, this occasioned me no little amazement; for I well remember that, in a former conversation with my friend, I particularly inquired if he had at any time met in London the Marchesa di Mentoni (who for some years previous to her marriage had resided in that city), when his answer, if I mistake not, gave me to understand that he had never visited the metropolis of Great Britain. I might as well here mention that I have more than once heard (without, of course, giving credit to a report involving so many improbabilities), that the person of whom I speak was not only by birth, but in education, an *Englishman*.

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“There is one painting,” said he, without being aware of my notice of the tragedy—“there is still one painting which you have not seen.” And throwing aside a drapery, he discovered a full-length portrait of the Marchesa Aphrodite.

Human art could have done no more in the delineation of her superhuman beauty. The same ethereal figure which stood before me the preceding night, upon the steps of the Ducal Palace, stood before me once again. But in the expression of the countenance, which was beaming all over with smiles, there still lurked (incomprehensible anomaly!) that fitful stain of melancholy which will ever be found inseparable from the perfection of the beautiful. Her right arm lay folded over her bosom. With her left she pointed downward to a curiously fashioned vase. One small, fairy foot, alone visible, barely touched the earth; and, scarcely discernible in the brilliant atmosphere which seemed to encircle and enshrine her loveliness, floated a pair of the most delicately imagined wings. My glance fell from the painting to the figure of my friend, and the vigorous words of

Chapman's *Bussy D'Ambois* quivered instinctively upon my lips:—

“I am up
Here like a Roman statue; I will stand
Till death hath made me marble!”

“Come,” he said at length, turning towards a table of richly enameled and massive silver, upon which were a few goblets fantastically stained, together with two large Etruscan vases, fashioned in the same extraordinary model as that in the foreground of the portrait, and filled with what I supposed to be Johannisberger. “Come,” he said abruptly, “let us drink! It is early—but let us drink. It is *indeed* early,” he continued musingly, as a cherub with a heavy golden hammer made the apartment ring with the first hour after sunrise: “it is *indeed* early—but what matters it? let us drink! Let us pour out an offering to yon solemn sun which these gaudy lamps and censers are so eager to subdue!” And, having made me pledge him in a bumper, he swallowed in rapid succession several goblets of the wine.

“To dream,” he continued, resuming the tone of his desultory conversation, as he held up to the rich light of a censer one of the magnificent vases—“to dream has been the business of my life. I have therefore framed for myself, as you see, a bower of dreams. In the heart of Venice could I have erected a better? You behold around you, it is true, a medley of architectural embellishments. The chastity of Ionia is offended by antediluvian devices, and the sphinxes of Egypt are outstretched upon carpets of gold. Yet the effect is incongruous to the timid alone. Proprieties of place, and especially of time, are the bugbears which terrify mankind from the contemplation of the magnificent. Once I was myself a decorist; but that sublimation of folly has palled upon my soul. All this is now the fitter for my purpose. Like these arabesque censers, my spirit is writhing in fire, and the delirium of this scene is fashioning me for the wilder

visions of that land of real dreams whither I am now rapidly departing." He here paused abruptly, bent his head to his bosom, and seemed to listen to a sound which I could not hear. At length, erecting his frame, he looked upwards, and ejaculated the lines of the Bishop of Chichester:—

*“Stay for me there! I will not fail
To meet thee in that hollow vale.”*

In the next instant, confessing the power of the wine, he threw himself at full length upon an ottoman.

A quick step was now heard upon the staircase, and a loud knock at the door rapidly succeeded. I was hastening to anticipate a second disturbance, when a page of Mentoni's household burst into the room, and faltered out, in a voice choking with emotion, the incoherent words, “My mistress!—my mistress!—Poisoned!—poisoned! Oh, beautiful—oh, beautiful Aphrodite!”

Bewildered, I flew to the ottoman, and endeavored to arouse the sleeper to a sense of the startling intelligence. But his limbs were rigid—his lips were livid—his lately beaming eyes were riveted in *death*. I staggered back towards the table—my hand fell upon a cracked and blackened goblet—and a consciousness of the entire and terrible truth flashed suddenly over my soul.

THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER

Son cœur est un luth suspendu;
Sitôt qu'on le touche il résonne."

BÉRANGER

DURING the whole of a dull, dark, and soundless day in the autumn of the year, when the clouds hung oppressively low in the heavens, I had been passing alone, on horseback, through a singularly dreary tract of country; and at length found myself, as the shades of the evening drew on, within view of the melancholy House of Usher. I know not how it was—but, with the first glimpse of the building, a sense of insufferable gloom pervaded my spirit. I say insufferable; for the feeling was unrelieved by any of that half-pleasurable, because poetic, sentiment with which the mind usually receives even the sternest natural images of the desolate or terrible. I looked upon the scene before me—upon the mere house, and the simple landscape features of the domain, upon the bleak walls, upon the vacant eye-like windows, upon a few rank sedges, and upon a few white trunks of decayed trees—with an utter depression of soul which I can compare to no earthly sensation more properly than to the after-dream of the reveler upon opium: the bitter lapse into everyday life, the hideous dropping off of the veil. There was an iciness, a sinking, a sickening of the heart, an unredeemed dreariness of thought which no goading of the imagination could torture into aught of the sublime. What was it—I paused to think—what was it that so unnerved me in the contemplation of the House of Usher? It was a mystery all insoluble; nor could I grapple with the shadowy fancies that crowded upon me as I pondered. I was forced to fall back upon the unsatisfactory conclusion, that while,

beyond doubt, there *are* combinations of very simple natural objects which have the power of thus affecting us, still the analysis of this power lies among considerations beyond our depth. It was possible, I reflected, that a mere different arrangement of the particulars of the scene, of the details of the picture, would be sufficient to modify, or perhaps to annihilate, its capacity for sorrowful impression; and acting upon this idea, I reined my horse to the precipitous brink of a black and lurid tarn that lay in unruffled luster by the dwelling, and gazed down—but with a shudder even more thrilling than before—upon the remodeled and inverted images of the gray sedge, and the ghastly tree-stems, and the vacant and eye-like windows.

Nevertheless, in this mansion of gloom I now proposed to myself a sojourn of some weeks. Its proprietor, Roderick Usher, had been one of my boon companions in boyhood; but many years had elapsed since our last meeting. A letter, however, had lately reached me in a distant part of the country—a letter from him—which in its wildly importunate nature had admitted of no other than a personal reply. The MS. gave evidence of nervous agitation. The writer spoke of acute bodily illness, of a mental disorder which oppressed him, and of an earnest desire to see me, as his best and indeed his only personal friend, with a view of attempting, by the cheerfulness of my society, some alleviation of his malady. It was the manner in which all this, and much more, was said—it was the apparent *heart* that went with his request—which allowed me no room for hesitation; and I accordingly obeyed forthwith what I still considered a very singular summons.

Although as boys we had been even intimate associates, yet I really knew little of my friend. His reserve had been always excessive and habitual. I was aware, however, that his very ancient family has been noted, time out of mind, for a peculiar sensibility of temperament, displaying itself, through long ages, in many works of exalted art, and mani-

fested of late in repeated deeds of munificent yet unobtrusive charity, as well as in a passionate devotion to the intricacies, perhaps even more than to the orthodox and easily recognizable beauties, of musical science. I had learned, too, the very remarkable fact that the stem of the Usher race, all time-honored as it was, had put forth at no period any enduring branch; in other words, that the entire family lay in the direct line of descent, and had always, with very trifling and very temporary variation, so lain. It was this deficiency, I considered, while running over in thought the perfect keeping of the character of the premises with the accredited character of the people, and while speculating upon the possible influence which the one, in the long lapse of centuries, might have exercised upon the other—it was this deficiency, perhaps, of collateral issue, and the consequent undeviating transmission from sire to son of the patrimony with the name, which had, at length, so identified the two as to merge the original title of the estate in the quaint and equivocal appellation of the “House of Usher”—an appellation which seemed to include, in the minds of the peasantry who used it, both the family and the family mansion.

I have said that the sole effect of my somewhat childish experiment, that of looking down within the tarn, had been to deepen the first singular impression. There can be no doubt that the consciousness of the rapid increase of my superstition—for why should I not so term it?—served mainly to accelerate the increase itself. Such, I have long known, is the paradoxical law of all sentiments having terror as a basis. And it might have been for this reason only, that, when I again uplifted my eyes to the house itself, from its image in the pool, there grew in my mind a strange fancy—a fancy so ridiculous, indeed, that I but mention it to show the vivid force of the sensations which oppressed me. I had so worked upon my imagination as really to believe that about the whole mansion and domain there hung an atmosphere peculiar to themselves and their immediate vicinity:

an atmosphere which had no affinity with the air of heaven, but which had reeked up from the decayed trees, and the gray wall, and the silent tarn: a pestilent and mystic vapor, dull, sluggish, faintly discernible, and leaden-hued.

Shaking off from my spirit what *must* have been a dream, I scanned more narrowly the real aspect of the building. Its principal feature seemed to be that of an excessive antiquity. The discoloration of ages had been great. Minute fungi overspread the whole exterior, hanging in a fine tangled web-work from the eaves. Yet all this was apart from any extraordinary dilapidation. No portion of the masonry had fallen; and there appeared to be a wild inconsistency between its still perfect adaptation of parts and the crumbling condition of the individual stones. In this there was much that reminded one of the specious totality of old woodwork which has rotted for long years in some neglected vault, with no disturbance from the breath of the external air. Beyond this indication of extensive decay, however, the fabric gave little token of instability. Perhaps the eye of a scrutinizing observer might have discovered a barely perceptible fissure, which, extending from the roof of the building in front, made its way down the wall in a zigzag direction, until it became lost in the sullen waters of the tarn.

Noticing these things, I rode over a short causeway to the house. A servant in waiting took my horse, and I entered the Gothic archway of the hall. A valet, of stealthy step, thence conducted me, in silence, through many dark and intricate passages in my progress to the studio of his master. Much that I encountered on the way contributed, I know not how, to heighten the vague sentiments of which I have already spoken. While the objects around me—while the carvings of the ceilings, the somber tapestries of the walls, the ebon blackness of the floors, and the phantasmagoric armorial trophies which rattled as I strode, were but matters to which, or to such as which, I had been accustomed from my infancy—while I hesitated not to acknowledge how familiar was all

this—I still wondered to find how unfamiliar were the fancies which ordinary images were stirring up. On one of the stair-cases, I met the physician of the family. His countenance, I thought, wore a mingled expression of low cunning and perplexity. He accosted me with trepidation and passed on. The valet now threw open a door and ushered me into the presence of his master.

The room in which I found myself was very large and lofty. The windows were long, narrow, and pointed, and at so vast a distance from the black oaken floor as to be altogether inaccessible from within. Feeble gleams of encrimsoned light made their way through the trellised panes, and served to render sufficiently distinct the more prominent objects around; the eye, however, struggled in vain to reach the remoter angles of the chamber, or the recesses of the vaulted and fretted ceiling. Dark draperies hung upon the walls. The general furniture was profuse, comfortless, antique, and tattered. Many books and musical instruments lay scattered about, but failed to give any vitality to the scene. I felt that I breathed an atmosphere of sorrow. An air of stern, deep, and irredeemable gloom hung over and pervaded all.

Upon my entrance, Usher arose from a sofa on which he had been lying at full length, and greeted me with a vivacious warmth which had much in it, I at first thought, of an overdone cordiality—of the constrained effort of the *ennuyé* man of the world. A glance, however, at his countenance, convinced me of his perfect sincerity. We sat down; and for some moments, while he spoke not, I gazed upon him with a feeling half of pity, half of awe. Surely man had never before so terribly altered, in so brief a period, as had Roderick Usher! It was with difficulty that I could bring myself to admit the identity of the wan being before me with the companion of my early boyhood. Yet the character of his face had been at all times remarkable. A cadaverousness of complexion; an eye large, liquid, and luminous beyond compari-

son; lips somewhat thin and very pallid, but of a surpassingly beautiful curve; a nose of a delicate Hebrew model, but with a breadth of nostril unusual in similar formations; a finely molded chin, speaking, in its want of prominence, of a want of moral energy; hair of a more than web-like softness and tenuity; these features, with an inordinate expansion above the regions of the temple, made up altogether a countenance not easily to be forgotten. And now in the mere exaggeration of the prevailing character of these features, and of the expression they were wont to convey, lay so much of change that I doubted to whom I spoke. The now ghastly pallor of the skin, and the now miraculous luster of the eye, above all things startled and even awed me. The silken hair, too, had been suffered to grow all unheeded, and as, in its wild gossamer texture, it floated rather than fell about the face, I could not, even with effort, connect its arabesque expression with any idea of simple humanity.

In the manner of my friend I was at once struck with an incoherence, an inconsistency; and I soon found this to arise from a series of feeble and futile struggles to overcome an habitual trepidancy, an excessive nervous agitation. For something of this nature I had indeed been prepared, no less by his letter than by reminiscences of certain boyish traits, and by conclusion deduced from his peculiar physical conformation and temperament. His action was alternately vivacious and sullen. His voice varied rapidly from a tremulous indecision (when the animal spirits seemed utterly in abeyance) to that species of energetic concision—that abrupt, weighty, unhurried, and hollow-sounding enunciation—that leaden, self-balanced and perfectly modulated guttural utterance—which may be observed in the lost drunkard, or the irreclaimable eater of opium, during the periods of his most intense excitement.

It was thus that he spoke of the object of my visit, of his earnest desire to see me, and of the solace he expected me to afford him. He entered, at some length, into what he con-

ceived to be the nature of his malady. It was, he said, a constitutional and a family evil, and one for which he despaired to find a remedy—a mere nervous affection, he immediately added, which would undoubtedly soon pass off. It displayed itself in a host of unnatural sensations. Some of these, as he detailed them, interested and bewildered me; although, perhaps, the terms and the general manner of the narration had their weight. He suffered much from a morbid acuteness of the senses; the most insipid food was alone endurable; he could wear only garments of certain texture; the odors of all flowers were oppressive; his eyes were tortured by even a faint light; and there were but peculiar sounds, and these from stringed instruments, which did not inspire him with horror.

To an anomalous species of terror I found him a bounden slave. "I shall perish," said he, "I *must* perish in this deplorable folly. Thus, thus, and not otherwise, shall I be lost. I dread the events of the future, not in themselves, but in their results. I shudder at the thought of any, even the most trivial, incident, which may operate upon this intolerable agitation of soul. I have, indeed, no abhorrence of danger, except in its absolute effect—in terror. In this unnerved—in this pitiable condition, I feel that the period will sooner or later arrive when I must abandon life and reason together, in some struggle with the grim phantasm, FEAR."

I learned moreover at intervals, and through broken and equivocal hints, another singular feature of his mental condition. He was enchained by certain superstitious impressions in regard to the dwelling which he tenanted, and whence, for many years, he had never ventured forth—in regard to an influence whose supposititious force was conveyed in terms too shadowy here to be restated—an influence which some peculiarities in the mere form and substance of his family mansion, had, by dint of long sufferance, he said, obtained over his spirit—an effect which the physique of the gray walls and turrets, and of the dim tarn into which they all looked

down, had, at length, brought about upon the morale of his existence.

He admitted, however, although with hesitation, that much of the peculiar gloom which thus afflicted him could be traced to a more natural and far more palpable origin—to the severe and long-continued illness, indeed to the evidently approaching dissolution, of a tenderly beloved sister—his sole companion for long years, his last and only relative on earth. “Her decease,” he said, with a bitterness which I can never forget, “would leave him (him the hopeless and the frail) the last of the ancient race of the Ushers.” While he spoke, the lady Madeline (for so was she called) passed slowly through a remote portion of the apartment, and, without having noticed my presence, disappeared. I regarded her with an utter astonishment not unmingled with dread, and yet I found it impossible to account for such feelings. A sensation of stupor oppressed me, as my eyes followed her retreating steps. When a door, at length, closed upon her, my glance sought instinctively and eagerly the countenance of the brother; but he had buried his face in his hands, and I could only perceive that a far more than ordinary wanness had overspread the emaciated fingers through which trickled many passionate tears.

The disease of the lady Madeline had long baffled the skill of her physicians. A settled apathy, a gradual wasting away of the person, and frequent although transient affection of a partially cataleptical character, were the unusual diagnosis. Hitherto she had steadily borne up against the pressure of her malady, and had not betaken herself finally to bed; but, on the closing in of the evening of my arrival at the house, she succumbed (as her brother told me at night with inexpressible agitation) to the prostrating power of the destroyer; and I learned that the glimpse I had obtained of her person would thus probably be the last I should obtain—that the lady, at least while living, would be seen by me no more.

For several days ensuing, her name was unmentioned by

either Usher or myself; and during this period I was busied in earnest endeavors to alleviate the melancholy of my friend. We painted and read together; or I listened, as if in a dream, to the wild improvisations of his speaking guitar. And thus, as a closer and still closer intimacy admitted me more unreservedly into the recesses of his spirit, the more bitterly did I perceive the futility of all attempt at cheering a mind from which darkness, as if an inherent positive quality, poured forth upon all objects of the moral and physical universe, in one unceasing radiation of gloom.

I shall ever bear about me a memory of the many solemn hours I thus spent alone with the master of the House of Usher. Yet I should fail in any attempt to convey an idea of the exact character of the studies, or of the occupations, in which he involved me, or led me the way. An excited and highly distempered ideality threw a sulphureous luster over all. His long improvised dirges will ring forever in my ears. Among other things, I hold painfully in mind a certain singular perversion and amplification of the wild air of the last waltz of Von Weber. From the paintings over which his elaborate fancy brooded, and which grew, touch by touch, into vaguenesses at which I shuddered the more thrillingly because I shuddered knowing not why;—from these paintings (vivid as their images now are before me) I would in vain endeavor to educe more than a small portion which should lie within the compass of merely written words. By the utter simplicity, by the nakedness of his designs, he arrested and overawed attention. If ever mortal painted an idea, that mortal was Roderick Usher. For me at least, in the circumstances then surrounding me, there arose, out of the pure abstractions which the hypochondriac contrived to throw upon his canvas, an intensity of intolerable awe, no shadow of which felt I ever yet in the contemplation of the certainly glowing yet too concrete reveries of Fuseli.

One of the phantasmagoric conceptions of my friend, partaking not so rigidly of the spirit of abstraction, may be

shadowed forth, although feebly, in words. A small picture presented the interior of an immensely long and rectangular vault or tunnel, with low walls, smooth, white, and without interruption or device. Certain accessory points of the design served well to convey the idea that this excavation lay at an exceeding depth below the surface of the earth. No outlet was observed in any portion of its vast extent, and no torch or other artificial source of light was discernible; yet a flood of intense rays rolled throughout, and bathed the whole in a ghastly and inappropriate splendor.

I have just spoken of that morbid condition of the auditory nerve which rendered all music intolerable to the sufferer, with the exception of certain effects of stringed instruments. It was, perhaps, the narrow limits to which he thus confined himself upon the guitar, which gave birth, in great measure, to the fantastic character of his performances. But the fervid *facility* of his impromptus could not be so accounted for. They must have been, and were, in the notes, as well as in the words of his wild fantasias (for he not unfrequently accompanied himself with rimed verbal improvisations), the result of that intense mental collectedness and concentration to which I have previously alluded as observable only in particular moments of the highest artificial excitement. The words of one of these rhapsodies I have easily remembered. I was, perhaps, the more forcibly impressed with it, as he gave it, because, in the under or mystic current of its meaning, I fancied that I perceived, and for the first time, a full consciousness, on the part of Usher, of the tottering of his lofty reason upon her throne. The verses, which were entitled "The Haunted Palace,"ⁿ ran very nearly, if not accurately, thus:—

I

In the greenest of our valleys
By good angels tenanted,
Once a fair and stately palace—
Radiant palace—reared its head.

In the monarch Thought's dominion,
It stood there;
Never seraph spread a pinion
Over fabric half so fair.

II

Banners yellow, glorious, golden,
On its roof did float and flow,
(This—all this—was in the olden
Time long ago)
And every gentle air that dallied,
In that sweet day,
Along the ramparts plumed and pallid,
A wingéd odor went away.

III

Wanderers in that happy valley
Through two luminous windows saw
Spirits moving musically
To a lute's well-tuned law,
Round about a throne where, sitting,
Porphyrogene,
In state his glory well befitting,
The ruler of the realm was seen.

IV

And all with pearl and ruby glowing
Was the fair palace door,
Through which came flowing, flowing, flowing,
And sparkling evermore,
A troop of Echoes whose sweet duty
Was but to sing,
In voices of surpassing beauty,
The wit and wisdom of their king.

V

But evil things, in robes of sorrow,
Assailed the monarch's high estate;
(Ah, let us mourn, for never morrow
Shall dawn upon him, desolate!)
And round about his home the glory
That blushed and bloomed
Is but a dim-remembered story
Of the old time entombed.

VI

And travelers now within that valley
Through the red-litten windows see
Vast forms that move fantastically
To a discordant melody;
While, like a ghastly rapid river,
Through the pale door
A hideous throng rush out forever,
And laugh—but smile no more.

I well remember that suggestions arising from this ballad led us into a train of thought, wherein there became manifest an opinion of Usher's which I mention not so much on account of its novelty, (for other men " have thought thus,) as on account of the pertinacity with which he maintained it. This opinion, in its general form, was that of the sentience of all vegetable things. But in his disordered fancy the idea had assumed a more daring character, and trespassed, under certain conditions, upon the kingdom of inorganization. I lack words to express the full extent, or the earnest *abandon* of his persuasion. The belief, however, was connected (as I have previously hinted) with the gray stones of the home of his forefathers. The conditions of the sentience had been here, he imagined, fulfilled in the method of collocation of these stones—in the order of their arrangement, as well as in that

of the many fungi which overspread them, and of the decayed trees which stood around—above all, in the long undisturbed endurance of this arrangement, and in its reduplication in the still waters of the tarn. Its evidence—the evidence of the sentience—was to be seen, he said (and I here started as he spoke), in the gradual yet certain condensation of an atmosphere of their own about the waters and the walls. The result was discoverable, he added, in that silent, yet importunate and terrible influence which for centuries had molded the destinies of his family, and which made *him* what I now saw him—what he was. Such opinions need no comment, and I will make none.

Our booksⁿ—the books which, for years, had formed no small portion of the mental existence of the invalid—were, as might be supposed, in strict keeping with this character of phantasm. We pored together over such works as the *Ververt* and *Chartreuse* of Gresset;ⁿ the *Belphegor* of Machiavelli;ⁿ the *Heaven and Hell* of Swedenborg;ⁿ the *Subterranean Voyage of Nicholas Klimm* by Holberg;ⁿ the *Chiromancy* of Robert Flud,ⁿ of Jean D'Indaginé, and of De la Chambre; the *Journey into the Blue Distance* of Tieck;ⁿ and the *City of the Sun* of Campanella. One favorite volume was a small octavo edition of the *Directorium Inquisitorum*, by the Dominican Eymeric de Gironne; and there were passages in Pomponius Mela,ⁿ about the old African Satyrs and Ægipans, over which Usher would sit dreaming for hours. His chief delight, however, was found in the perusal of an exceedingly rare and curious book in quarto Gothic—the manual of a forgotten church—the *Virgiliæ Mortuorum secundum Chorum Ecclesiæ Maguntinæ*.

I could not help thinking of the wild ritual of this work, and of its probable influence upon the hypochondriac, when one evening, having informed me abruptly that the lady Madeline was no more, he stated his intention of preserving her corpse for a fortnight, (previously to its final interment,) in one of the numerous vaults within the main walls of the

building. The worldly reason, however, assigned for this singular proceeding, was one which I did not feel at liberty to dispute. The brother had been led to his resolution (so he told me) by consideration of the unusual character of the malady of the deceased, of certain obtrusive and eager inquiries on the part of her medical men, and of the remote and exposed situation of the burial ground of the family. I will not deny that when I called to mind the sinister countenance of the person whom I met upon the staircase, on the day of my arrival at the house, I had no desire to oppose what I regarded as at best but a harmless, and by no means an unnatural, precaution.

At the request of Usher, I personally aided him in the arrangements for the temporary entombment. The body having been encoffined, we two alone bore it to its rest. The vault in which we placed it (and which had been so long unopened that our torches, half smothered in its oppressive atmosphere, gave us little opportunity for investigation) was small, damp, and entirely without means of admission for light; lying, at great depth, immediately beneath that portion of the building in which was my own sleeping apartment. It had been used, apparently, in remote feudal times, for the worst purposes of a donjon keep, and in later days as a place of deposit for powder, or some other highly combustible substance, as a portion of its floor, and the whole interior of a long archway through which we reached it, were carefully sheathed with copper. The door, of massive iron, had been, also, similarly protected. Its immense weight caused an unusually sharp grating sound, as it moved upon its hinges.

Having deposited our mournful burden upon trestles within this region of horror, we partially turned aside the yet unscrewed lid of the coffin, and looked upon the face of the tenant. A striking similitude between the brother and sister now first arrested my attention; and Usher, divining, perhaps, my thoughts, murmured out some few words from which I learned that the deceased and himself had been twins

and that sympathies of a scarcely intelligible nature had always existed between them. Our glances, however, rested not long upon the dead—for we could not regard her unawed. The disease which had thus entombed the lady in the maturity of youth, had left, as usual in all maladies of a strictly cataleptical character, the mockery of a faint blush upon the bosom and the face, and that suspiciously lingering smile upon the lip which is so terrible in death. We replaced and screwed down the lid, and, having secured the door of iron, made our way, with toil, into the scarcely less gloomy apartments of the upper portion of the house.

And now, some days of bitter grief having elapsed, an observable change came over the features of the mental disorder of my friend. His ordinary manner had vanished. His ordinary occupations were neglected or forgotten. He roamed from chamber to chamber with hurried, unequal, and objectless step. The pallor of his countenance had assumed, if possible, a more ghastly hue—but the luminousness of his eye had utterly gone out. The once occasional huskiness of his tone was heard no more; and a tremulous quaver, as if of extreme terror, habitually characterized his utterance. There were times, indeed, when I thought his unceasingly agitated mind was laboring with some oppressive secret, to divulge which he struggled for the necessary courage. At times, again, I was obliged to resolve all into the mere inexplicable vagaries of madness, for I beheld him gazing upon vacancy for long hours, in an attitude of the profoundest attention, as if listening to some imaginary sound. It was no wonder that his condition terrified—that it infected me. I felt creeping upon me, by slow yet certain degrees, the wild influences of his own fantastic yet impressive superstitions.

It was, especially, upon retiring to bed late in the night of the seventh or eighth day after the placing of the lady Madeline within the donjon, that I experienced the full power of such feelings. Sleep came not near my couch, while the hours waned and waned away. I struggled to reason off the nerv-

ousness which had dominion over me. I endeavored to believe that much, if not all, of what I felt was due to the bewildering influence of the gloomy furniture of the room—of the dark and tattered draperies which, tortured into motion by the breath of a rising tempest, swayed fitfully to and fro upon the walls, and rustled uneasily about the decorations of the bed. But my efforts were fruitless. An irrepressible tremor gradually pervaded my frame; and at length there sat upon my very heart an incubus of utterly causeless alarm. Shaking this off with a gasp and a struggle, I uplifted myself upon the pillows, and, peering earnestly within the intense darkness of the chamber, hearkened—I know not why, except that an instinctive spirit prompted me—to certain low and indefinite sounds which came, through the pauses of the storm, at long intervals, I knew not whence. Overpowered by an intense sentiment of horror, unaccountable yet unendurable, I threw on my clothes with haste, (for I felt that I should sleep no more during the night,) and endeavored to arouse myself from the pitiable condition into which I had fallen, by pacing rapidly to and fro through the apartment.

I had taken but few turns in this manner, when a light step on an adjoining staircase arrested my attention. I presently recognized it as that of Usher. In an instant afterward he rapped with a gentle touch at my door, and entered, bearing a lamp. His countenance was, as usual, cadaverously wan—but, moreover, there was a species of mad hilarity in his eyes—an evidently restrained hysteria in his whole demeanor. His air appalled me—but anything was preferable to the solitude which I had so long endured, and I even welcomed his presence as a relief.

“And you have not seen it?” he said abruptly, after having stared about him for some moments in silence—“you have not then seen it?—but, stay! you shall.” Thus speaking, and having carefully shaded his lamp, he hurried to one of the casements, and threw it freely open to the storm.

The impetuous fury of the entering gust nearly lifted us from our feet. It was, indeed, a tempestuous yet sternly beautiful night, and one wildly singular in its terror and its beauty. A whirlwind had apparently collected its force in our vicinity; for there were frequent and violent alterations in the direction of the wind; and the exceeding density of the clouds (which hung so low as to press upon the turrets of the house) did not prevent our perceiving the life-like velocity with which they flew careering from all points against each other, without passing away into the distance. I say that even their exceeding density did not prevent our perceiving this; yet we had no glimpse of the moon or stars, nor was there any flashing forth of the lightning. But the under surfaces of the huge masses of agitated vapor, as well as all terrestrial objects immediately around us, were glowing in the unnatural light of a faintly luminous and distinctly visible gaseous exhalation which hung about and enshrouded the mansion.

“You must not—you shall not behold this!” said I, shudderingly, to Usher, as I led him with a gentle violence from the window to a seat. “These appearances, which bewilder you, are merely electrical phenomena not uncommon—or it may be that they have their ghastly origin in the rank miasma of the tarn. Let us close this casement; the air is chilling and dangerous to your frame. Here is one of your favorite romances. I will read, and you shall listen;—and so we will pass away this terrible night together.”

The antique volume which I had taken up was the *Mad Trist* of Sir Launcelot Canning; ⁿ but I had called it a favorite of Usher’s more in sad jest than in earnest; for, in truth, there is little in its uncouth and unimaginative prolixity which could have had interest for the lofty and spiritual ideality of my friend. It was, however, the only book immediately at hand; and I indulged a vague hope that the excitement which now agitated the hypochondriac might find relief (for the history of mental disorder is full of similar

anomalies) even in the extremeness of the folly which I should read. Could I have judged, indeed, by the wild overstrained air of vivacity with which he hearkened, or apparently hearkened, to the words of the tales, I might well have congratulated myself upon the success of my design.

I had arrived at that well-known portion of the story where Ethelred, the hero of the *Trist*, having sought in vain for peaceable admission into the dwelling of the hermit, proceeds to make good an entrance by force. Here, it will be remembered, the words of the narrative run thus:—

“And Ethelred, who was by nature of a doughty heart, and who was now mighty withal, on account of the powerfulness of the wine which he had drunken, waited no longer to hold parley with the hermit, who, in sooth, was of an obstinate and maliceful turn, but, feeling the rain upon his shoulders, and fearing the rising of the tempest, uplifted his mace outright, and with blows made quickly room in the plankings of the door for his gauntleted hand; and now pulling therewith sturdily, he so cracked, and ripped, and tore all asunder, that the noise of the dry and hollow-sounding wood alarmed and reverberated throughout the forest.”

At the termination of this sentence I started, and for a moment paused; for it appeared to me (although I at once concluded that my excited fancy had deceived me)—it appeared to me that from some very remote portion of the mansion there came, indistinctly, to my ears, what might have been, in its exact similarity of character, the echo (but a stifled and dull one certainly) of the very cracking and ripping sound which Sir Launcelot had so particularly described. It was, beyond doubt, the coincidence alone which had arrested my attention; for, amid the rattling of the sashes of the casements, and the ordinary commingled noises of the still increasing storm, the sound, in itself, had nothing, surely, which should have interested or disturbed me. I continued the story:—

“But the good champion Ethelred, now entering within the door, was sore enraged and amazed to perceive no signal of the

maliceful hermit; but, in the stead thereof, a dragon of a scaly and prodigious demeanor, and of a fiery tongue, which sate in guard before a palace of gold, with a floor of silver; and upon the wall there hung a shield of shining brass with this legend enwritten—

Who entereth herein, a conqueror hath bin;

Who slayeth the dragon, the shield he shall win.

And Ethelred uplifted his mace, and struck upon the head of the dragon, which fell before him, and gave up his pesty breath, with a shriek so horrid and harsh, and withal so piercing, that Ethelred had fain to close his ears with his hands against the dreadful noise of it, the like whereof was never before heard.”

Here again I paused abruptly, and now with a feeling of wild amazement; for there could be no doubt whatever that, in this instance, I did actually hear (although from what direction it proceeded I found it impossible to say) a low and apparently distant, but harsh, protracted, and most unusual screaming or grating sound—the exact counterpart of what my fancy had already conjured up for the dragon’s unnatural shriek as described by the romancer.

Oppressed, as I certainly was, upon the occurrence of this second and most extraordinary coincidence, by a thousand conflicting sensations, in which wonder and extreme terror were predominant, I still retained sufficient presence of mind to avoid exciting, by any observation, the sensitive nervousness of my companion. I was by no means certain that he had noticed the sounds in question; although, assuredly, a strange alteration had during the last few minutes taken place in his demeanor. From a position fronting my own, he had gradually brought round his chair, so as to sit with his face to the door of the chamber; and thus I could but partially perceive his features, although I saw that his lip trembled as if he were murmuring inaudibly. His head had dropped upon his breast—yet I knew that he was not asleep, from the wide and rigid opening of the eye as I caught a glance of it in profile. The motion of his body, too, was at variance with this idea—for

he rocked from side to side with a gentle yet constant and uniform sway. Having rapidly taken notice of all this, I resumed the narrative of Sir Launcelot, which thus proceeded:—

“And now, the champion, having escaped from the terrible fury of the dragon, bethinking himself of the brazen shield, and of the breaking up of the enchantment which was upon it, removed the carcass from out of the way before him, and approached valorously over the silver pavement of the castle to where the shield was upon the wall; which in sooth tarried not for his full coming, but fell down at his feet upon the silver floor, with a mighty great and terrible ringing sound.”

No sooner had these syllables passed my lips, than—as if a shield of brass had indeed, at the moment, fallen heavily upon a floor of silver—I became aware of a distinct, hollow, metallic and clangorous, yet apparently muffled reverberation. Completely unnerved, I leaped to my feet; but the measured rocking movement of Usher was undisturbed. I rushed to the chair in which he sat. His eyes were bent fixedly before him, and throughout his whole countenance there reigned a stony rigidity. But, as I placed my hand upon his shoulder, there came a strong shudder over his whole person; a sickly smile quivered about his lips; and I saw that he spoke in a low, hurried, and gibbering murmur, as if unconscious of my presence. Bending closely over him, I at length drank in the hideous import of his words.

“Not hear it?—yes, I hear it, and *have* heard it. Long—long—long—many minutes, many hours, many days, have I heard it—yet I dared not—oh, pity me, miserable wretch that I am!—I dared not—I *dared* not speak! *We have put her living in the tomb!* Said I not that my senses were acute? I *now* tell you that I heard her first feeble movements in the hollow coffin. I heard them—many, many days ago—yet I dared not—I *dared not speak!* And now—to-night—Ethelred—ha! ha!—the breaking of the hermit’s door, and the death cry of the dragon, and the clangor of the shield!—

say, rather, the rending of her coffin, and the grating of the iron hinges of her prison, and her struggles within the coppered archway of the vault! Oh, whither shall I fly? Will she not be here anon? Is she not hurrying to upbraid me for my haste? Have I not heard her footstep on the stair? Do I not distinguish that heavy and horrible beating of her heart? Madman!"—here he sprang furiously to his feet, and shrieked out his syllables, as if in the effort he were giving up his soul—"Madman! I tell you that she now stands without the door!"

As if in the superhuman energy of his utterance there had been found the potency of a spell, the huge antique panels to which the speaker pointed threw slowly back, upon the instant, their ponderous and ebony jaws. It was the work of the rushing gust—but then without those doors there *did* stand the lofty and enshrouded figure of the lady Madeline of Usher. There was blood upon her white robes, and the evidence of some bitter struggle upon every portion of her emaciated frame. For a moment she remained trembling and reeling to and fro upon the threshold—then, with a low moaning cry, fell heavily inward upon the person of her brother, and, in her violent and now final death agonies, bore him to the floor a corpse, and a victim to the terrors he had anticipated.

From that chamber, and from that mansion, I fled aghast. The storm was still abroad in all its wrath as I found myself crossing the old causeway. Suddenly there shot along the path a wild light, and I turned to see whence a gleam so unusual could have issued; for the vast house and its shadows were alone behind me. The radiance was that of the full, setting, and blood-red moon, which now shone vividly through that once barely-discernible fissure, of which I have before spoken as extending from the roof of the building, in a zigzag direction, to the base. While I gazed, this fissure rapidly widened—there came a fierce breath of the whirlwind—the entire orb of the satellite burst at once upon my sight—

my brain reeled as I saw the mighty walls rushing asunder—there was a long tumultuous shouting sound like the voice of a thousand waters—and the deep and dank tarn at my feet closed sullenly and silently over the fragments of the “*House of Usher.*”

A DESCENT INTO THE MAELSTRÖM

The ways of God in Nature, as in Providence, are not as *our* ways; nor are the models that we frame any way commensurate to the vastness, profundity, and unsearchableness of His works, *which have a depth in them greater than the well of Democritus.*

JOSEPH GLANVILLE

WE had now reached the summit of the loftiest crag. For some minutes the old man seemed too much exhausted to speak.

“Not long ago,” said he at length, “and I could have guided you on this route as well as the youngest of my sons; but, about three years past, there happened to me an event such as never happened before to mortal man—or at least such as no man ever survived to tell of—and the six hours of deadly terror which I then endured have broken me up body and soul. You suppose me a *very* old man—but I am not. It took less than a single day to change these hairs from a jetty black to white, to weaken my limbs, and to unstring my nerves, so that I tremble at the least exertion, and am frightened at a shadow. Do you know I can scarcely look over this little cliff without getting giddy?”

The “little cliff,” upon whose edge he had so carelessly thrown himself down to rest that the weightier portion of his body hung over it, while he was only kept from falling by the tenure of his elbow on its extreme and slippery edge—this “little cliff” arose, a sheer unobstructed precipice of black shining rock, some fifteen or sixteen hundred feet from the world of crags beneath us. Nothing would have tempted me to within half a dozen yards of its brink. In truth so deeply was I excited by the perilous position of my companion, that I fell at full length upon the ground, clung to the shrubs

around me, and dared not even glance upward at the sky—while I struggled in vain to divest myself of the idea that the very foundations of the mountain were in danger from the fury of the winds. It was long before I could reason myself into sufficient courage to sit up and look out into the distance.

“You must get over these fancies,” said the guide, “for I have brought you here that you might have the best possible view of the scene of that event I mentioned—and to tell you the whole story with the spot just under your eye.

“We are now,” he continued, in that particularizing manner which distinguished him—“we are now close upon the Norwegian coast—in the sixty-eighth degree of latitude—in the great province of Nordland—and in the dreary district of Lofoden. The mountain upon whose top we sit is Helsegen, the Cloudy. Now raise yourself up a little higher—hold on to the grass if you feel giddy—so—and look out, beyond the belt of vapor beneath us, into the sea.”

I looked dizzily, and beheld a wide expanse of ocean, whose waters wore so inky a hue as to bring at once to my mind the Nubian geographer’s account of the *Mare Tenebrarum*. A panorama more deplorably desolate no human imagination can conceive. To the right and left, as far as the eye could reach, there lay outstretched, like ramparts of the world, lines of horridly black and beetling cliff, whose character of gloom was but the more forcibly illustrated by the surf which reared high up against it its white and ghastly crest, howling and shrieking forever. Just opposite the promontory upon whose apex we were placed, and at a distance of some five or six miles out at sea, there was visible a small, bleak-looking island; or, more properly, its position was discernible through the wilderness of surge in which it was enveloped. About two miles nearer the land arose another of smaller size, hideously craggy and barren, and encompassed at various intervals by a cluster of dark rocks.

The appearance of the ocean, in the space between the more distant island and the shore, had something very un-

usual about it. Although, at the time, so strong a gale was blowing landward that a brig in the remote offing lay to under a double-reefed trysail, and constantly plunged her whole hull out of sight, still there was here nothing like a regular swell, but only a short, quick, angry cross dashing of water in every direction—as well in the teeth of the wind as otherwise. Of foam there was little except in the immediate vicinity of the rocks.

“The island in the distance,” resumed the old man, “is called by the Norwegians Vurrgh. The one midway is Moskoe. That a mile to the northward is Ambaaren. Yonder are Iflesen, Hoeyholm, Kieldholm, Suarven, and Buckholm. Farther off—between Moskoe and Vurrgh—are Otterholm, Flimen, Sandflesen, and Skarholm. These are the true names of the places—but why it has been thought necessary to name them at all is more than either you or I can understand. Do you hear anything? Do you see any change in the water?”

We had now been about ten minutes upon the top of Helseggen, to which we had ascended from the interior of Lofoden, so that we had caught no glimpse of the sea until it had burst upon us from the summit. As the old man spoke, I became aware of a loud and gradually increasing sound, like the moaning of a vast herd of buffaloes upon an American prairie; and at the same moment I perceived that what seamen term the *chopping* character of the ocean beneath us, was rapidly changing into a current which set to the eastward. Even while I gazed, this current acquired a monstrous velocity. Each moment added to its speed—to its headlong impetuosity. In five minutes the whole sea, as far as Vurrgh, was lashed into ungovernable fury; but it was between Moskoe and the coast that the main uproar held its sway. Here the vast bed of the waters, seamed and scarred into a thousand conflicting channels, burst suddenly into frenzied convulsion—heaving, boiling, hissing—gyrating in gigantic and innumerable vortices, and all whirling and plunging on to

the eastward with a rapidity which water never elsewhere assumes, except in precipitous descents.

In a few minutes more, there came over the scene another radical alteration. The general surface grew somewhat more smooth, and the whirlpools, one by one, disappeared, while prodigious streaks of foam became apparent where none had been seen before. These streaks, at length, spreading out to a great distance, and entering into combination, took unto themselves the gyratory motion of the subsided vortices, and seemed to form the germ of another more vast. Suddenly—very suddenly—this assumed a distinct and definite existence, in a circle of more than a mile in diameter. The edge of the whirl was represented by a broad belt of gleaming spray; but no particle of this slipped into the mouth of the terrific funnel, whose interior, as far as the eye could fathom it, was a smooth shining, and jet-black wall of water, inclined to the horizon at an angle of some forty-five degrees, speeding dizzily round and round with a swaying and sweltering motion, and sending forth to the winds an appalling voice, half shriek, half roar, such as not even the mighty cataract of Niagara ever lifts up in its agony to Heaven.

The mountain trembled to its very base, and the rock rocked. I threw myself upon my face, and clung to the scant herbage in an excess of nervous agitation.

“This,” said I at length, to the old man—“this *can* be nothing else than the great whirlpool of the Maelström.”

“So it is sometimes termed,” said he. “We Norwegians call it the Moskoe-ström, from the island of Moskoe in the midway.”

The ordinary accounts of this vortex had by no means prepared me for what I saw. That of Jonas Ramus, which is perhaps the most circumstantial of any, cannot impart the faintest conception either of the magnificence or of the horror of the scene—or of the wild bewildering sense of *the novel* which confounds the beholder. I am not sure from what point of view the writer in question surveyed it, nor at what

time; but it could neither have been from the summit of Helseggen, nor during a storm. There are some passages of his description, nevertheless, which may be quoted for their details, although their effect is exceedingly feeble in conveying an impression of the spectacle.

“Between Lofoden and Moskoe,” he says, “the depth of the water is between thirty-six and forty fathoms; but on the other side, toward Ver (Vurrgh), this depth decreases so as not to afford a convenient passage for a vessel, without the risk of splitting on the rocks, which happens even in the calmest weather. When it is flood, the stream runs up the country between Lofoden and Moskoe with a boisterous rapidity; but the roar of its impetuous ebb to the sea is scarce equaled by the loudest and most dreadful cataracts, the noise being heard several leagues off; and the vortices or pits are of such an extent and depth, that if a ship comes within its attraction, it is inevitably absorbed and carried down to the bottom, and there beat to pieces against the rocks; and when the water relaxes, the fragments thereof are thrown up again. But these intervals of tranquillity are only at the turn of the ebb and flood, and in calm weather, and last but a quarter of an hour, its violence gradually returning. When the stream is most boisterous, and its fury heightened by a storm, it is dangerous to come within a Norway mile of it. Boats, yachts, and ships have been carried away by not guarding against it before they were within its reach. It likewise happens frequently that whales come too near the stream, and are overpowered by its violence; and then it is impossible to describe their howlings and belowlings in their fruitless struggles to disengage themselves. A bear once, attempting to swim from Lofoden to Moskoe, was caught by the stream and borne down, while he roared terribly, so as to be heard on shore. Large stocks of firs and pine trees, after being absorbed by the current, rise again broken and torn to such a degree as if bristles grew upon them. This plainly shows the bottom to consist of craggy rocks,

among which they are whirled to and fro. This stream is regulated by the flux and reflux of the sea—it being constantly high and low water every six hours. In the year 1645, early in the morning of Sexagesima Sunday, it raged with such noise and impetuosity that the very stones of the houses on the coast fell to the ground.”

In regard to the depth of the water, I could not see how this could have been ascertained at all in the immediate vicinity of the vortex. The “forty fathoms” must have reference only to portions of the channel close upon the shore either of Moskoe or Lofoden. The depth in the center of the Moskoe-ström must be immeasurably greater; and no better proof of this fact is necessary than can be obtained from even the sidelong glance into the abyss of the whirl which may be had from the highest crag of Helseggen. Looking down from this pinnacle upon the howling Phlegethon “below, I could not help smiling at the simplicity with which the honest Jonas Ramus records, as a matter difficult of belief, the anecdotes of the whales and the bears; for it appeared to me, in fact, a self-evident thing that the largest ships of the line in existence, coming within the influence of that deadly attraction, could resist it as little as a feather the hurricane, and must disappear bodily and at once.

The attempts to account for the phenomenon—some of which, I remember, seemed to me sufficiently plausible in perusal—now wore a very different and unsatisfactory aspect. The idea generally received is that this, as well as three smaller vortices among the Feroe Islands, “have no other cause than the collision of waves rising and falling, at flux and reflux, against a ridge of rocks and shelves, which confines the water so that it precipitates itself like a cataract; and thus the higher the flood rises, the deeper must the fall be, and the natural result of all is a whirlpool or vortex, the prodigious suction of which is sufficiently known by lesser experiments.”—These are the words of the “Encyclopedia Britannica.” Kircher “and others imagine that in the center

of the channel of the Maelström is an abyss penetrating the globe, and issuing in some very remote part—the Gulf of Bothnia being somewhat decidedly named in one instance. This opinion, idle in itself, was the one to which, as I gazed, my imagination most readily assented; and, mentioning it to the guide, I was rather surprised to hear him say that, although it was the view almost universally entertained of the subject by the Norwegians, it nevertheless was not his own. As to the former notion he confessed his inability to comprehend it; and here I agreed with him—for, however conclusive on paper, it becomes altogether unintelligible, and even absurd, amid the thunder of the abyss.

“You have had a good look at the whirl now,” said the old man, “and if you will creep round this crag, so as to get in its lee, and deaden the roar of the water, I will tell you a story that will convince you I ought to know something of the Moskoe-ström.”

I placed myself as desired, and he proceeded.

“Myself and my two brothers once owned a schooner-rigged smack of about seventy tons burden, with which we were in the habit of fishing among the islands beyond Moskoe, nearly to Vurrgh. In all violent eddies at sea there is good fishing, at proper opportunities, if one has only the courage to attempt it; but among the whole of the Lofoden coastmen we three were the only ones who made a regular business of going out to the islands, as I tell you. The usual grounds are a great way lower down to the southward. There fish can be got at all hours, without much risk, and therefore these places are preferred. The choice spots over here among the rocks, however, not only yield the finest variety, but in far greater abundance; so that we often got in a single day what the more timid of the craft could not scrape together in a week. In fact, we made it a matter of desperate speculation—the risk of life standing instead of labor, and courage answering for capital.

“We kept the smack in a cove about five miles higher up

the coast than this; and it was our practice, in fine weather, to take advantage of the fifteen minutes' slack to push across the main channel of the Moskoe-ström, far above the pool, and then drop down upon anchorage somewhere near Otterholm, or Sandflesen, where the eddies are not so violent as elsewhere. Here we used to remain until nearly time for slack water again, when we weighed and made for home. We never set out upon this expedition without a steady side wind for coming and going—one that we felt sure would not fail us before our return—and we seldom made a miscalculation upon this point. Twice, during six years, we were forced to stay all night at anchor on account of a dead calm, which is a rare thing just about here; and once we had to remain on the grounds nearly a week, starving to death, owing to a gale which blew up shortly after our arrival, and made the channel too boisterous to be thought of. Upon this occasion we should have been driven out to sea in spite of everything (for the whirlpools threw round and round so violently, that at length, we fouled our anchor and dragged it) if it had not been that we drifted into one of the innumerable cross currents—here to-day and gone to-morrow—which drove us under the lee of Flimen, where, by good luck, we brought up.

“I could not tell you the twentieth part of the difficulties we encountered ‘on the ground’—it is a bad spot to be in, even in good weather—but we made shift always to run the gantlet of the Moskoe-ström itself without accident; although at times my heart has been in my mouth when we happened to be a minute or so behind or before the slack. The wind sometimes was not as strong as we thought it at starting, and then we made rather less way than we could wish, while the current rendered the smack unmanageable. My eldest brother had a son eighteen years old, and I had two stout boys of my own. These would have been of great assistance at such times, in using the sweeps, as well as afterward in fishing—but, somehow, although we ran the risk ourselves, we had not the heart to let the young ones get

into the danger—for, after all said and done, it *was* a horrible danger, and that is the truth.

“It is now within a few days of three years since what I am going to tell you occurred. It was on the tenth of July, 18—, a day which the people of this part of the world will never forget—for it was one in which blew the most terrible hurricane that ever came out of the heavens. And yet all the morning, and indeed until late in the afternoon, there was a gentle and steady breeze from the southwest, while the sun shone brightly, so that the oldest seamen among us could not have foreseen what was to follow.

“The three of us—my two brothers and myself—had crossed over to the islands about two o’clock P.M., and soon nearly loaded the smack with fine fish, which, we all remarked, were more plenty that day than we had ever known them. It was just seven, *by my watch*, when we weighed and started for home, so as to make the worst of the Ström at slack water, which we knew would be at eight.

“We set out with a fresh wind on our starboard quarter, and for some time spanked along at a great rate, never dreaming of danger, for indeed we saw not the slightest reason to apprehend it. All at once we were taken aback by a breeze from over Helseggen. This was most unusual—something that had never happened to us before—and I began to feel a little uneasy, without exactly knowing why. We put the boat on the wind, but could make no headway at all for the eddies, and I was upon the point of proposing to return to the anchorage, when, looking astern, we saw the whole horizon covered with a singular copper-colored cloud that rose with the most amazing velocity.

“In the meantime the breeze that had headed us off fell away, and we were dead becalmed, drifting about in every direction. This state of things, however, did not last long enough to give us time to think about it. In less than a minute the storm was upon us—in less than two the sky was entirely overcast—and what with this and the driving spray,

it became suddenly so dark that we could not see each other in the smack.

“Such a hurricane as then blew it is folly to attempt describing. The oldest seaman in Norway never experienced anything like it. We had let our sails go by the run before it cleverly took us; but, at the first puff, both our masts went by the board as if they had been sawed off—the mainmast taking with it my youngest brother, who had lashed himself to it for safety.

“Our boat was the lightest feather of a thing that ever sat upon water. It had a complete flush deck, with only a small hatch near the bow, and this hatch it had always been our custom to batten down when about to cross the Ström, by way of precaution against the chopping seas. But for this circumstance we should have foundered at once—for we lay entirely buried for some moments. How my elder brother escaped destruction I cannot say, for I never had an opportunity of ascertaining. For my part, as soon as I had let the foresail run, I threw myself flat on deck, with my feet against the narrow gunwale of the bow, and with my hands grasping a ringbolt near the foot of the foremast. It was mere instinct that prompted me to do this—which was undoubtedly the very best thing I could have done—for I was too much flurried to think.

“For some moments we were completely deluged, as I say, and all this time I held my breath, and clung to the bolt. When I could stand it no longer I raised myself upon my knees, still keeping hold with my hands, and thus got my head clear. Presently our little boat gave herself a shake, just as a dog does in coming out of the water, and thus rid herself, in some measure, of the seas. I was now trying to get the better of the stupor that had come over me, and to collect my senses so as to see what was to be done, when I felt somebody grasp my arm. It was my elder brother, and my heart leaped for joy, for I had made sure that he was overboard—but the next moment all this joy was turned into horror—for

he put his mouth close to my ear, and screamed out the word '*Moskoe-ström!*'

"No one will ever know what my feelings were at that moment. I shook from head to foot as if I had had the most violent fit of the ague. I knew what he meant by that one word well enough—I knew what he wished to make me understand. With the wind that now drove us on, we were bound for the whirl of the Ström, and nothing could save us!

"You perceive that in crossing the Ström *channel*, we always went a long way up above the whirl, even in the calmest weather, and then had to wait and watch carefully for the slack—but now we were driving right upon the pool itself, and in such a hurricane as this! 'To be sure,' I thought, 'we shall get there just about the slack—there is some little hope in that—but in the next moment I cursed myself for being so great a fool as to dream of hope at all. I knew very well that we were doomed, had we been ten times a ninety-gun ship.

"By this time the first fury of the tempest had spent itself, or perhaps we did not feel it so much as we scudded before it; but at all events the seas, which at first had been kept down by the wind, and lay flat and frothing, now got up into absolute mountains. A singular change, too, had come over the heavens. Around in every direction it was still as black as pitch, but nearly overhead there burst out, all at once, a circular rift of clear sky—as clear as I ever saw—and of a deep bright blue—and through it there blazed forth the full moon with a luster that I never before knew her to wear. She lit up everything about us with the greatest distinctness—but, oh God, what a scene it was to light up!

"I now made one or two attempts to speak to my brother—but, in some manner which I could not understand, the din had so increased that I could not make him hear a single word, although I screamed at the top of my voice in his ear. Presently he shook his head, looking as pale as death, and held up one of his fingers, as if to say *listen!*

“At first I could not make out what he meant—but soon a hideous thought flashed upon me. I dragged my watch from its fob. It was not going. I glanced at its face by the moonlight, and then burst into tears as I flung it far away into the ocean. *It had run down at seven o'clock! We were behind the time of the slack, and the whirl of the Ström was in full fury!*

“When a boat is well built, properly trimmed, and not deep laden, the waves in a strong gale, when she is going large, seem always to slip from beneath her—which appears very strange to a landsman—and this is what is called *riding*, in sea phrase.

“Well, so far we had ridden the swells very cleverly; but presently a gigantic sea happened to take us right under the counter, and bore us with it as it rose—up—up—as if into the sky. I would not have believed that any wave could rise so high. And then down we came with a sweep, a slide, and a plunge, that made me feel sick and dizzy, as if I was falling from some lofty mountain top in a dream. But while we were up I had thrown a quick glance around—and that one glance was all sufficient. I saw our exact position in an instant. The Moskoe-ström whirlpool was about a quarter of a mile dead ahead—but no more like the everyday Moskoe-ström, than the whirl as you now see it is like a mill race. If I had not known where we were, and what we had to expect, I should not have recognized the place at all. As it was, I involuntarily closed my eyes in horror. The lids clenched themselves together as if in a spasm.

“It could not have been more than two minutes afterwards until we suddenly felt the waves subside, and were enveloped in foam. The boat made a sharp half turn to larboard, and then shot off in its new direction like a thunderbolt. At the same moment the roaring noise of the water was completely drowned in a kind of shrill shriek—such a sound as you might imagine given out by the water pipes of many thousand steam vessels, letting off their steam all together. We were

now in the belt of surf that always surrounds the whirl; and I thought, of course, that another moment would plunge us into the abyss—down which we could only see indistinctly on account of the amazing velocity with which we were borne along. The boat did not seem to sink into the water at all, but to skim like an air bubble upon the surface of the surge. Her starboard side was next the whirl, and on the larboard arose the world of ocean we had left. It stood like a huge writhing wall between us and the horizon.

“It may appear strange, but now, when we were in the very jaws of the gulf, I felt more composed than when we were only approaching it. Having made up my mind to hope no more, I got rid of a great deal of that terror which unmanned me at first. I suppose it was despair that strung my nerves.

“It may look like boasting—but what I tell you is truth—I began to reflect how magnificent a thing it was to die in such a manner, and how foolish it was in me to think of so paltry a consideration as my own individual life, in view of so wonderful a manifestation of God’s power. I do believe that I blushed with shame when this idea crossed my mind. After a little while I became possessed with the keenest curiosity about the whirl itself. I positively felt a *wish* to explore its depths, even at the sacrifice I was going to make; and my principal grief was that I should never be able to tell my old companions on shore about the mysteries I should see. These, no doubt, were singular fancies to occupy a man’s mind in such extremity—and I have often thought, since, that the revolutions of the boat around the pool might have rendered me a little light-headed.

“There was another circumstance which tended to restore my self-possession; and this was the cessation of the wind, which could not reach us in our present situation—for, as you saw yourself, the belt of surf is considerably lower than the general bed of the ocean, and this latter now towered above us, a high, black, mountainous ridge. If you have never been at sea in a heavy gale, you can form no idea of

the confusion of mind occasioned by the wind and spray together. They blind, deafen, and strangle you, and take away all power of action or reflection. But we were now, in a great measure, rid of these annoyances—just as death-condemned felons in prison are allowed petty indulgences, forbidden them while their doom is yet uncertain.

“How often we made the circuit of the belt it is impossible to say. We careered round and round for perhaps an hour, flying rather than floating, getting gradually more and more into the middle of the surge, and then nearer and nearer to its horrible inner edge. All this time I had never let go of the ringbolt. My brother was at the stern, holding on to a small empty water cask which had been securely lashed under the coop of the counter, and was the only thing on deck that had not been swept overboard when the gale first took us. As we approached the brink of the pit he let go his hold upon this, and made for the ring, from which, in the agony of his terror, he endeavored to force my hands, as it was not large enough to afford us both a secure grasp. I never felt deeper grief than when I saw him attempt this act—although I knew he was a madman when he did it—a raving maniac through sheer fright. I did not care, however, to contest the point with him. I knew it could make no difference whether either of us held on at all; so I let him have the bolt, and went astern to the cask. This there was no great difficulty in doing; for the smack flew round steadily enough, and upon an even keel—only swaying to and fro, with the immense sweeps and swelters of the whirl. Scarcely had I secured myself in my new position, when we gave a wild lurch to starboard, and rushed headlong into the abyss. I muttered a hurried prayer to God, and thought all was over.

“As I felt the sickening sweep of the descent, I had instinctively tightened my hold upon the barrel, and closed my eyes. For some seconds I dared not open them—while I expected instant destruction, and wondered that I was not already in my death struggles with the water. But moment after mo-

ment elapsed. I still lived. The sense of falling had ceased; and the motion of the vessel seemed much as it had been before, while in the belt of foam, with the exception that she now lay more along. I took courage and looked once again upon the scene.

“Never shall I forget the sensations of awe, horror, and admiration with which I gazed about me. The boat appeared to be hanging, as if by magic, midway down, upon the interior surface of a funnel vast in circumference, prodigious in depth, and whose perfectly smooth sides might have been mistaken for ebony, but for the bewildering rapidity with which they spun around, and for the gleaming and ghastly radiance they shot forth, as the rays of the full moon, from that circular rift amid the clouds, which I have already described, streamed in a flood of golden glory along the black walls, and far away down into the inmost recesses of the abyss.

“At first I was too much confused to observe anything accurately. The general burst of terrific grandeur was all that I beheld. When I recovered myself a little, however, my gaze fell instinctively downward. In this direction I was able to obtain an unobstructed view, from the manner in which the smack hung on the inclined surface of the pool. She was quite upon an even keel—that is to say, her deck lay in a plane parallel with that of the water—but this latter sloped at an angle of more than forty-five degrees, so that we seemed to be lying upon our beam ends. I could not help observing, nevertheless, that I had scarcely more difficulty in maintaining my hold and footing in this situation, than if we had been upon a dead level; and this, I suppose, was owing to the speed at which we revolved.

“The rays of the moon seemed to search the very bottom of the profound gulf; but still I could make out nothing distinctly, on account of a thick mist in which everything there was enveloped, and over which there hung a magnificent rainbow, like that narrow and tottering bridge which Mussulmans say is the only pathway between Time and Eternity. This

mist, or spray, was no doubt occasioned by the clashing of the great walls of the funnel, as they all met together at the bottom—but the yell that went up to the heavens from out of that mist, I dare not attempt to describe.

“Our first slide into the abyss itself, from the belt of foam above, had carried us to a great distance down the slope; but our farther descent was by no means proportionate. Round and round we swept—not with any uniform movement but in dizzy swings and jerks, that sent us sometimes only a few hundred yards—sometimes nearly the complete circuit of the whirl. Our progress downward, at each revolution, was slow, but very perceptible.

“Looking about me upon the wide waste of liquid ebony on which we were thus borne, I perceived that our boat was not the only object in the embrace of the whirl. Both above and below us were visible fragments of vessels, large masses of building timber and trunks of trees, with many smaller articles, such as pieces of house furniture, broken boxes, barrels, and staves. I have already described the unnatural curiosity which had taken the place of my original terrors. It appeared to grow upon me as I drew nearer and nearer to my dreadful doom. I now began to watch, with a strange interest, the numerous things that floated in our company. I *must* have been delirious—for I even sought *amusement* in speculating upon the relative velocities of their several descents toward the foam below. ‘This fir tree,’ I found myself at one time saying, ‘will certainly be the next thing that takes the awful plunge and disappears,’—and then I was disappointed to find that the wreck of a Dutch merchant ship overtook it and went down before. At length, after making several guesses of this nature, and being deceived in all—this fact—the fact of my invariable miscalculation, set me upon a train of reflection that made my limbs again tremble, and my heart beat heavily once more.

“It was not a new terror that thus affected me, but the dawn of a more exciting *hope*. This hope arose partly from

memory, and partly from present observation. I called to mind the great variety of buoyant matter that strewed the coast of Lofoden, having been absorbed and then thrown forth by the Moskoe-ström. By far the greater number of the articles were shattered in the most extraordinary way—so chafed and roughened as to have the appearance of being stuck full of splinters—but then I distinctly recollected that there were *some* of them which were not disfigured at all. Now I could not account for this difference except by supposing that the roughened fragments were the only ones which had been *completely absorbed*—that the others had entered the whirl at so late a period of the tide, or, from some reason, had descended so slowly after entering, that they did not reach the bottom before the turn of the flood came, or of the ebb, as the case might be. I conceived it possible, in either instance, that they might thus be whirled up again to the level of the ocean, without undergoing the fate of those which had been drawn in more early or absorbed more rapidly. I made, also, three important observations. The first was, that as a general rule, the larger the bodies were, the more rapid their descent; the second, that, between two masses of equal extent, the one spherical, and the other of *any other shape*, the superiority in speed of descent was with the sphere; the third, that, between two masses of equal size, the one cylindrical, and the other of any other shape, the cylinder was absorbed the more slowly. Since my escape, I have had several conversations on this subject with an old schoolmaster of the district; and it was from him that I learned the use of the words ‘cylinder’ and ‘sphere.’ He explained to me—although I have forgotten the explanation—how what I observed was, in fact, the natural consequence of the forms of the floating fragments, and showed me how it happened that a cylinder, swimming in a vortex, offered more resistance to its suction, and was drawn in with greater difficulty, than an equally bulky body, of any form whatever.

“There was one startling circumstance which went a great

way in enforcing these observations, and rendering me anxious to turn them to account, and this was that, at every revolution, we passed something like a barrel, or else the yard or the mast of a vessel, while many of these things, which had been on our level when I first opened my eyes upon the wonders of the whirlpool, were now high up above us, and seemed to have moved but little from their original station.

“I no longer hesitated what to do. I resolved to lash myself securely to the water cask upon which I now held, to cut it loose from the counter, and to throw myself with it into the water. I attracted my brother’s attention by signs, pointed to the floating barrels that came near us, and did everything in my power to make him understand what I was about to do. I thought at length that he comprehended my design—but, whether this was the case or not, he shook his head despairingly, and refused to move from his station by the ringbolt. It was impossible to reach him; the emergency admitted of no delay; and so, with a bitter struggle, I resigned him to his fate, fastened myself to the cask by means of the lashings which secured it to the counter, and precipitated myself with it into the sea, without another moment’s hesitation.

“The result was precisely what I had hoped it might be. As it is myself who now tell you this tale—as you see that I *did* escape—and as you are already in possession of the mode in which this escape was effected, and must therefore anticipate all that I have farther to say—I will bring my story quickly to conclusion. It might have been an hour, or thereabout, after my quitting the smack, when, having descended to a vast distance beneath me, it made three or four wild gyrations in rapid succession, and, bearing my loved brother with it, plunged headlong, at once and forever, into the chaos of foam below. The barrel to which I was attached sunk very little farther than half the distance between the bottom of the gulf and the spot at which I leaped overboard, before a great change took place in the character of the whirlpool. The slope of the sides of the vast funnel

became momentarily less and less steep. The gyrations of the whirl grew, gradually, less and less violent. By degrees, the froth and the rainbow disappeared, and the bottom of the gulf seemed slowly to uprise. The sky was clear, the winds had gone down, and the full moon was setting radiantly in the west, when I found myself on the surface of the ocean, in full view of the shores of Lofoden, and above the spot where the pool of the Moskoe-ström *had been*. It was the hour of the slack, but the sea still heaved in mountainous waves from the effects of the hurricane. I was borne violently into the channel of the Ström, and in a few minutes was hurried down the coast into the 'grounds' of the fishermen. A boat picked me up—exhausted from fatigue—and (now that the danger was removed) speechless from the memory of its horror. Those who drew me on board were my old mates and daily companions, but they knew me no more than they would have known a traveler from the spirit land. My hair, which had been raven-black the day before, was as white as you see it now. They say, too, that the whole expression of my countenance had changed. I told them my story—they did not believe it. I now tell it to you—and I can scarcely expect you to put more faith in it than did the merry fishermen of Lofoden."

THE GOLDBUG

What ho! what ho! this fellow is dancing mad!
He hath been bitten by the Tarantula.

All in the Wrong.

MANY years ago, I contracted an intimacy with a Mr. William Legrand. He was of an ancient Huguenot family, and had once been wealthy; but a series of misfortunes had reduced him to want. To avoid the mortification consequent upon his disasters, he left New Orleans, the city of his forefathers, and took up his residence at Sullivan's Island, near Charleston, South Carolina.

This island is a very singular one. It consists of little else than the sea sand, and is about three miles long. Its breadth at no point exceeds a quarter of a mile. It is separated from the mainland by a scarcely perceptible creek, oozing its way through a wilderness of reeds and slime, a favorite resort of the marsh hen. The vegetation, as might be supposed, is scant, or at least dwarfish. No trees of any magnitude are to be seen. Near the western extremity, where Fort Moultrie stands, and where are some miserable frame buildings, tenanted during summer by the fugitives from Charleston dust and fever, may be found, indeed, the bristly palmetto; but the whole island, with the exception of this western point, and a line of hard white beach on the seacoast, is covered with a dense undergrowth of the sweet myrtle, so much prized by the horticulturists of England. The shrub here often attains the height of fifteen or twenty feet, and forms an almost impenetrable coppice, burdening the air with its fragrance.

In the utmost recesses of this coppice, not far from the eastern or more remote end of the island, Legrand had built

himself a small hut, which he occupied when I first, by mere accident, made his acquaintance. This soon ripened into friendship—for there was much in the recluse to excite interest and esteem. I found him well educated, with unusual powers of mind, but infected with misanthropy, and subject to perverse moods of alternate enthusiasm and melancholy. He had with him many books, but rarely employed them. His chief amusements were gunning and fishing, or sauntering along the beach and through the myrtles in quest of shells or entomological specimens;—his collection of the latter might have been envied by a Swammerdamm." In these excursions he was usually accompanied by an old negro, called Jupiter, who had been manumitted before the reverses of the family, but who could be induced, neither by threats nor by promises, to abandon what he considered his right of attendance upon the footsteps of his young "Massa Will." It is not improbable that the relatives of Legrand, conceiving him to be somewhat unsettled in intellect, had contrived to instill this obstinacy into Jupiter, with a view to the supervision and guardianship of the wanderer.

The winters in the latitude of Sullivan's Island are seldom very severe, and in the fall of the year it is a rare event indeed when a fire is considered necessary. About the middle of October, 18—, there occurred, however, a day of remarkable chilliness. Just before sunset I scrambled my way through the evergreens to the hut of my friend, whom I had not visited for several weeks—my residence being at that time in Charleston, a distance of nine miles from the island, while the facilities of passage and repassage were very far behind those of the present day. Upon reaching the hut I rapped, as was my custom, and, getting no reply, sought for the key where I knew it was secreted, unlocked the door and went in. A fine fire was blazing upon the hearth. It was a novelty, and by no means an ungrateful one. I threw off an overcoat, took an armchair by the crackling logs, and awaited patiently the arrival of my hosts.

Soon after dark they arrived, and gave me a most cordial welcome. Jupiter, grinning from ear to ear, bustled about to prepare some marsh hens for supper. Legrand was in one of his fits—how else shall I term them?—of enthusiasm. He had found an unknown bivalve, forming a new genus, and, more than this, he had hunted down and secured, with Jupiter's assistance, a *scarabæus* which he believed to be totally new, but in respect to which he wished to have my opinion on the morrow.

"And why not to-night?" I asked, rubbing my hands over the blaze, and wishing the whole tribe of *scarabæi* at the devil.

"Ah, if I had only known you were here!" said Legrand, "but it's so long since I saw you; and how could I foresee that you would pay me a visit this very night of all others? As I was coming home I met Lieutenant G——, from the fort, and, very foolishly, I lent him the bug; so it will be impossible for you to see it until the morning. Stay here to-night, and I will send Jup down for it at sunrise. It is the loveliest thing in creation!"

"What?—sunrise?"

"Nonsense! no!—the bug. It is of a brilliant gold color—about the size of a large hickory nut—with two jet-black spots near one extremity of the back, and another, somewhat longer, at the other. The *antennæ* are—"

"Dey aint *no* tin in him, Massa Will, I keep a tellin on you," here interrupted Jupiter; "de bug is a goolebug, solid, ebery bit of him, inside and all, sep him wing—neber feel half so hebby a bug in my life."

"Well, suppose it is, Jup," replied Legrand, somewhat more earnestly, it seemed to me, than the case demanded, "is that any reason for your letting the birds burn? The color"—here he turned to me—"is really almost enough to warrant Jupiter's idea. You never saw a more brilliant metallic luster than the scales emit—but of this you cannot judge till to-morrow. In the meantime I can give you some

idea of the shape." Saying this, he seated himself at a small table, on which were a pen and ink, but no paper. He looked for some in a drawer, but found none.

"Never mind," said he at length, "this will answer"; and he drew from his waistcoat pocket a scrap of what I took to be very dirty foolscap, and made upon it a rough drawing with the pen. While he did this, I retained my seat by the fire, for I was still chilly. When the design was complete, he handed it to me without rising. As I received it, a low growl was heard, succeeded by a scratching at the door. Jupiter opened it, and a large Newfoundland, belonging to Legrand, rushed in, leaped upon my shoulders, and loaded me with caresses; for I had shown him much attention during previous visits. When his gambols were over, I looked at the paper, and, to speak the truth, found myself not a little puzzled at what my friend had depicted.

"Well!" I said, after contemplating it for some minutes, "this *is* a strange *scarabæus*, I must confess; new to me; never saw anything like it before—unless it was a skull, or a death's-head, which it more nearly resembles than any thing else that has come under *my* observation."

"A death's-head!" echoed Legrand—"oh—yes—well, it has something of that appearance upon paper, no doubt. The two upper black spots look like eyes, eh? and the longer one at the bottom like a mouth—and then the shape of the whole is oval."

"Perhaps so," said I; "but, Legrand, I fear you are no artist. I must wait until I see the beetle itself, if I am to form any idea of its personal appearance."

"Well, I don't know," said he, a little nettled, "I draw tolerably—*should* do it at least—have had good masters, and flatter myself that I am not quite a blockhead."

"But, my dear fellow, you are joking then," said I; "this is a very passable *skull*,—indeed, I may say that it is a very *excellent* skull, according to the vulgar notions about such specimens of physiology—and your *scarabæus* must be the

queerest *scarabæus* in the world if it resembles it. Why, we may get up a very thrilling bit of superstition upon this hint. I presume you will call the bug *scarabæus caput hominis*, or something of that kind—there are many similar titles in the Natural Histories. But where are the *antennæ* you spoke of?”

“The *antennæ!*” said Legrand, who seemed to be getting unaccountably warm upon the subject; “I am sure you must see the *antennæ*. I made them as distinct as they are in the original insect, and I presume that is sufficient.”

“Well, well,” I said, “perhaps you have—still I don’t see them”; and I handed him the paper without additional remark, not wishing to ruffle his temper; but I was much surprised at the turn affairs had taken; his ill humor puzzled me—and as for the drawing of the beetle, there were positively *no antennæ* visible, and the whole *did* bear a very close resemblance to the ordinary cuts of a death’s-head.

He received the paper very peevishly, and was about to crumple it, apparently to throw it in the fire, when a casual glance at the design seemed suddenly to rivet his attention. In an instant his face grew violently red—in another as excessively pale. For some minutes he continued to scrutinize the drawing minutely where he sat. At length he arose, took a candle from the table, and proceeded to seat himself upon a sea chest in the farthest corner of the room. Here again he made an anxious examination of the paper; turning it in all directions. He said nothing, however, and his conduct greatly astonished me; yet I thought it prudent not to exacerbate the growing moodiness of his temper by any comment. Presently he took from his coat pocket a wallet, placed the paper carefully in it, and deposited both in a writing desk, which he locked. He now grew more composed in his demeanor; but his original air of enthusiasm had quite disappeared. Yet he seemed not so much sulky as abstracted. As the evening wore away he became more and more absorbed in reverie, from which no sallies of

mine could arouse him. It had been my intention to pass the night at the hut, as I had frequently done before, but, seeing my host in this mood, I deemed it proper to take leave. He did not press me to remain, but, as I departed, he shook my hand with even more than his usual cordiality.

It was about a month after this (and during the interval I had seen nothing of Legrand) when I received a visit, at Charleston, from his man, Jupiter. I had never seen the good old negro look so dispirited, and I feared that some serious disaster had befallen my friend.

“Well, Jup,” said I, “what is the matter now?—how is your master?”

“Why, to speak de troof, massa, him not so berry well as mought be.”

“Not well! I am truly sorry to hear it. What does he complain of?”

“Dar! dat’s it!—him neber plain of notin—but him berry sick for all dat.”

“*Very* sick, Jupiter!—why didn’t you say so at once? Is he confined to bed?”

“No, dat he aint!—he aint find nowhar—dat’s just whar de shoe pinch—my mind is got to be berry hebby bout poor Massa Will.”

“Jupiter, I should like to understand what it is you are talking about. You say your master is sick. Hasn’t he told you what ails him?”

“Why, massa, taint worf while for to git mad bout de matter—Massa Will say noffin at all aint de matter wid him—but den what make him go bout looking dis here way, wid he head down and he soldiers up, and as white as a gose? And then he keep a syphon all de time—”

“Keeps a what, Jupiter?”

“Keeps a syphon wid de figgurs on de slate—de queerest figgurs I ebber did see. Ise gittin to be skeered, I tell you. Hab for to keep mighty tight eye pon him noovers. Todder day he gib me slip fore de sun up and was gone de whole ob

de blessed day. I had a big stick ready cut for to gib him d——d good beating when he did come—but Ise sich a fool dat I hadn't de heart arter all—he look so berry poorly.”

“Eh?—what?—ah, yes!—upon the whole I think you had better not be too severe with the poor fellow—don't flog him, Jupiter—he can't very well stand it—but can you form no idea of what has occasioned this illness, or rather this change of conduct? Has anything unpleasant happened since I saw you?”

“No, massa, dey aint bin noffin onpleasant *since* den—'twas *fore* den I'm feared—'twas de berry day you was dare.”

“How? what do you mean?”

“Why, massa, I mean de bug—dare now.”

“The what?”

“De bug—I'm berry sartain dat Massa Will bin bit somewhere bout de head by dat goolebug.”

“And what cause have you, Jupiter, for such a supposition?”

“Claws enuff, massa, and mouff too. I nebber did see sich a d——d bug—he kick and he bite every ting what cum near him. Massa Will cotch him fuss, but had for to let him go gin mighty quick, I tell you—den was de time he must ha got de bite. I didn't like de look ob de bug mouff, myself, no how, so I wouldn't take hold ob him wid my finger, but I cotch him wid a piece ob paper dat I found. I rap him up in de paper and stuff piece ob it in he mouff—dat was de way.”

“And you think, then, that your master was really bitten by the beetle, and that the bite made him sick?”

“I don't tink noffin about it—I nose it. What make him dream bout de goole so much, if taint cause he bit by de goolebug? Ise heerd bout dem goolebugs fore dis.”

“But how do you know he dreams about gold?”

“How I know? why, cause he talk about it in he sleep—dat's how I nose.”

“Well, Jup, perhaps you are right; but to what fortunate circumstances am I to attribute the honor of a visit from you to-day?”

“What de matter, massa?”

“Did you bring any message from Mr. Legrand?”

“No, massa, I bring dis here pissel”; and here Jupiter handed me a note which ran thus:

MY DEAR —: Why have I not seen you for so long a time? I hope you have not been so foolish as to take offense at any little *brusquerie* of mine; but no, that is improbable.

Since I saw you I have had great cause for anxiety. I have something to tell you, yet scarcely know how to tell it, or whether I should tell it at all.

I have not been quite well for some days past, and poor old Jup annoys me, almost beyond endurance, by his well-meant attentions. Would you believe it?—he had prepared a huge stick, the other day, with which to chastise me for giving him the slip, and spending the day, *solus*, among the hills on the mainland. I verily believe that my ill looks alone saved me a flogging.

I have made no addition to my cabinet since we met.

If you can, in any way, make it convenient, come over with Jupiter. *Do* come. I wish to see you *to-night*, upon business of importance. I assure you that it is of the *highest* importance.

Ever yours,

WILLIAM LEGRAND.

There was something in the tone of this note which gave me great uneasiness. Its whole style differed materially from that of Legrand. What could he be dreaming of? What new crotchet possessed his excitable brain? What “business of the highest importance” could *he* possibly have to transact? Jupiter’s account of him boded no good. I dreaded lest the continued pressure of misfortune had, at length, fairly unsettled the reason of my friend. Without a moment’s hesitation, therefore, I prepared to accompany the negro.

Upon reaching the wharf, I noticed a scythe and three spades, all apparently new, lying in the bottom of the boat in which we were to embark.

“What is the meaning of all this, Jup?” I inquired.

“Him syfe, massa, and spade.”

“Very true; but what are they doing here?”

“Him de syfe and de spade what Massa Will sis pon my buying for him in de town, and de debbil’s own lot of money I had to gib for em.”

“But what, in the name of all that is mysterious, is your ‘Massa Will’ going to do with scythes and spades?”

“Dat’s more dan *I* know, and debbil take me if I don’t blieve ’tis more dan he know, too. But it’s all cum ob de bug.”

Finding that no satisfaction was to be obtained by Jupiter, whose whole intellect seemed to be absorbed by “de bug,” I now stepped into the boat and made sail. With a fair and strong breeze we soon ran into the little cove to the northward of Fort Moultrie, and a walk of some two miles brought us to the hut. It was about three in the afternoon when we arrived. Legrand had been awaiting us in eager expectation. He grasped my hand with a nervous *empressement*, which alarmed me and strengthened the suspicions already entertained. His countenance was pale even to ghastliness, and his deep-set eyes glared with unnatural luster. After some inquiries respecting his health, I asked him, not knowing what better to say, if he had yet obtained the *scarabæus* from Lieutenant G——.

“Oh, yes,” he replied, coloring violently, “I got it from him the next morning. Nothing should tempt me to part with that *scarabæus*. Do you know that Jupiter is quite right about it?”

“In what way?” I asked, with a sad foreboding at heart.

“In supposing it to be a bug of *real gold*.” He said this with an air of profound seriousness, and I felt inexpressibly shocked.

“This bug is to make my fortune,” he continued, with a

triumphant smile, "to reinstate me in my family possessions. Is it any wonder, then, that I prize it? Since Fortune has thought fit to bestow it upon me, I have only to use it properly and I shall arrive at the gold of which it is the index. Jupiter, bring me that *scarabæus!*"

"What! de bug, massa? I'd rudder not go fer trubble dat bug—you mus git him for your own self." Hereupon Legrand arose, with a grave and stately air, and brought me the beetle from a glass case in which it was inclosed. It was a beautiful *scarabæus*, and, at that time, unknown to naturalists—of course a great prize in a scientific point of view. There were two round, black spots near one extremity of the back, and a long one near the other. The scales were exceedingly hard and glossy, with all the appearance of bur-nished gold. The weight of the insect was very remarkable, and, taking all things into consideration, I could hardly blame Jupiter for his opinion respecting it; but what to make of Legrand's agreement with that opinion, I could not, for the life of me, tell.

"I sent for you," said he, in a grandiloquent tone, when I had completed my examination of the beetle, "I sent for you that I might have your counsel and assistance in furthering the views of Fate and of the bug—"

"My dear Legrand," I cried, interrupting him, "you are certainly unwell, and had better use some little precautions. You shall go to bed, and I will remain with you a few days, until you get over this. You are feverish and—"

"Feel my pulse," said he.

I felt it, and, to say the truth, found not the slightest indication of fever.

"But you may be ill, and yet have no fever. Allow me this once to prescribe for you. In the first place, go to bed. In the next—"

"You are mistaken," he interposed, "I am as well as I can expect to be under the excitement which I suffer. If you really wish me well, you will relieve this excitement."

“And how is this to be done?”

“Very easily. Jupiter and myself are going upon an expedition into the hills, upon the mainland, and, in this expedition, we shall need the aid of some person in whom we can confide. You are the only one we can trust. Whether we succeed or fail, the excitement which you now perceive in me will be equally allayed.”

“I am anxious to oblige you in any way,” I replied; “but do you mean to say that this infernal beetle has any connection with your expedition into the hills?”

“It has.”

“Then, Legrand, I can become a party to no such absurd proceeding.”

“I am sorry—very sorry—for we shall have to try it by ourselves.”

“Try it by yourselves! The man is surely mad!—but stay—how long do you propose to be absent?”

“Probably all night. We shall start immediately, and be back, at all events, by sunrise.”

“And will you promise me, upon your honor, that when this freak of yours is over, and the bug business (good God!) settled to your satisfaction, you will then return home and follow my advice implicitly, as that of your physician?”

“Yes; I promise; and now let us be off, for we have no time to lose.”

With a heavy heart I accompanied my friend. We started about four o'clock—Legrand, Jupiter, the dog, and myself. Jupiter had with him the scythe and spades—the whole of which he insisted upon carrying, more through fear, it seemed to me, of trusting either of the implements within reach of his master, than from any excess of industry or complaisance. His demeanor was dogged in the extreme, and “dat d——d bug” were the sole words which escaped his lips during the journey. For my own part, I had charge of a couple of dark lanterns, while Legrand contented himself with the *scarabæus*, which he carried attached to the end

of a bit of whipcord, twirling it to and fro, with the air of a conjuror, as he went. When I observed this last, plain evidence of my friend's aberration of mind, I could scarcely refrain from tears. I thought it best, however, to humor his fancy, at least for the present, or until I could adopt some more energetic measures with a chance of success. In the meantime I endeavored, but all in vain, to sound him in regard to the object of the expedition. Having succeeded in inducing me to accompany him, he seemed unwilling to hold conversation upon any topic of minor importance, and to all my questions vouchsafed no other reply than "We shall see!"

We crossed the creek at the head of the island by means of a skiff, and, ascending the high grounds on the shore of the mainland, proceeded in a northwesterly direction, through a tract of country excessively wild and desolate, where no trace of a human footstep was to be seen. Legrand led the way with decision; pausing only for an instant, here and there, to consult what appeared to be certain landmarks of his own contrivance upon a former occasion.

In this manner we journeyed for about two hours, and the sun was just setting when we entered a region infinitely more dreary than any yet seen. It was a species of table-land, near the summit of an almost inaccessible hill, densely wooded from base to pinnacle, and interspersed with huge crags that appeared to lie loosely upon the soil, and in many cases were prevented from precipitating themselves into the valleys below merely by the support of the trees against which they reclined. Deep ravines, in various directions, gave an air of still sterner solemnity to the scene.

The natural platform to which we had clambered was thickly overgrown with brambles, through which we soon discovered that it would have been impossible to force our way but for the scythe; and Jupiter, by direction of his master, proceeded to clear for us a path to the foot of an enormously tall tulip tree, which stood, with some eight or

ten oaks, upon the level, and far surpassed them all, and all other trees which I had then ever seen, in the beauty of its foliage and form, in the wide spread of its branches, and in the general majesty of its appearance. When we reached this tree, Legrand turned to Jupiter, and asked him if he thought he could climb it. The old man seemed a little staggered by the question, and for some moments made no reply. At length he approached the huge trunk, walked slowly around it, and examined it with minute attention. When he had completed his scrutiny, he merely said:

“Yes, massa, Jup climb any tree he ebber see in he life.”

“Then up with you as soon as possible, for it will soon be too dark to see what we are about.”

“How far mus go up, massa?” inquired Jupiter.

“Get up the main trunk first, and then I will tell you which way to go—and here—stop! take this beetle with you.”

“De bug, Massa Will!—de goolebug!” cried the negro, drawing back in dismay—“what for mus tote de bug way up de tree?—d—n if I do!”

“If you are afraid, Jup, a great big negro like you, to take hold of a harmless little dead beetle, why, you can carry it up by this string—but, if you do not take it up with you in some way, I shall be under the necessity of breaking your head with this shovel.”

“What de matter now, massa?” said Jup, evidently shamed into compliance; “always want fur to raise fuss wid old nigger. Was only funnin anyhow. *Me* feered de bug! what I keer for de bug?” Here he took cautiously hold of the extreme end of the string, and, maintaining the insect as far from his person as circumstances would permit, prepared to ascend the tree.

In youth, the tulip tree, or *Liriodendron tulipifera*, the most magnificent of American foresters, has a trunk peculiarly smooth, and often rises to a great height without lateral branches; but, in its riper age, the bark becomes gnarled and

uneven, while many short limbs make their appearance on the stem. Thus the difficulty of ascension, in the present case, lay more in semblance than in reality. Embracing the huge cylinder, as closely as possible, with his arms and knees, seizing with his hands some projections, and resting his naked toes upon others, Jupiter, after one or two narrow escapes from falling, at length wriggled himself into the first great fork, and seemed to consider the whole business as virtually accomplished. The *risk* of the achievement was, in fact, now over, although the climber was some sixty or seventy feet from the ground.

"Which way mus go now, Massa Will?" he asked.

"Keep up the largest branch,—the one on this side," said Legrand. The negro obeyed him promptly, and apparently with but little trouble, ascending higher and higher, until no glimpse of his squat figure could be obtained through the dense foliage which enveloped it. Presently his voice was heard in a sort of halloo.

"How much fudder is got for go?"

"How high up are you?" asked Legrand.

"Ebber so fur," replied the negro; "can see de sky fru de top ob de tree."

"Never mind the sky, but attend to what I say. Look down the trunk and count the limbs below you on this side. How many limbs have you passed?"

"One, two, tree, four, fibe—I done pass fibe big limb, massa, pon dis side."

"Then go one limb higher."

In a few minutes the voice was heard again, announcing that the seventh limb was attained.

"Now, Jup," cried Legrand, evidently much excited, "I want you to work your way out upon that limb as far as you can. If you see anything strange, let me know."

By this time what little doubt I might have entertained of my poor friend's insanity was put finally at rest. I had no alternative but to conclude him stricken with lunacy,

and I became seriously anxious about getting him home. While I was pondering upon what was best to be done, Jupiter's voice was again heard.

"Mos feerd for to ventur pon dis limb berry far—'tis dead limb putty much all de way."

"Did you say it was a *dead* limb, Jupiter?" cried Legrand in a quavering voice.

"Yes, massa, him dead as de doornail—done up for sartin—done departed dis here life."

"What in the name of heaven shall I do?" asked Legrand, seemingly in the greatest distress.

"Do!" said I, glad of an opportunity to interpose a word, "why come home and go to bed. Come now!—that's a fine fellow. It's getting late, and, besides, you remember your promise."

"Jupiter," cried he, without heeding me in the least, "do you hear me?"

"Yes, Massa Will, hear you ebber so plain."

"Try the wood well, then, with your knife, and see if you think it *very* rotten."

"Him rotten, massa, sure nuff," replied the negro in a few moments, "but not so berry rotten as mought be. Mought ventur out leetle way pon de limb by myself, dat's true."

"By yourself!—what do you mean?"

"Why, I mean de bug. 'Tis *berry* hebby bug. Spose I drop him down fuss, and den de limb won't break wid just de weight ob one nigger."

"You infernal scoundrel!" cried Legrand, apparently much relieved, "what do you mean by telling me such nonsense as that? As sure as you let that beetle fall, I'll break your neck. Look here, Jupiter! do you hear me?"

"Yes, massa, needn't hollo at poor nigger dat style."

"Well! now listen!—if you will venture out on the limb as far as you think safe, and not let go the beetle, I'll make you a present of a silver-dollar as soon as you get down."

"I'm gwine, Massa Will—deed I is," replied the negro very promptly—"mos out to the eend now?"

"*Out to the end!*" here fairly screamed Legrand, "do you say you are out to the end of that limb?"

"Soon be to the eend, massa,—o-o-o-o-oh! Lor-gol-amarcy! what *is* dis here pon de tree?"

"Well!" cried Legrand, highly delighted, "what is it?"

"Why taint nuffin but a skull—somebody bin lef him head up de tree, and de crows done gobble ebery bit ob de meat off."

"A skull, you say!—very well!—how is it fastened to the limb?—what holds it on?"

"Sure nuff, massa; mus look. Why, dis berry curous sarcumstance, pon my word—dare's a great big nail in de skull, what fastens ob it on to de tree."

"Well now, Jupiter, do exactly as I tell you—do you hear?"

"Yes, massa."

"Pay attention, then!—find the left eye of the skull."

"Hum! hoo! dat's good! why, dar aint no eye lef at all."

"Curse your stupidity! do you know your right hand from your left?"

"Yes, I nose dat—nose all bout dat—'tis my lef hand what I chops de wood wid."

"To be sure! you are left-handed; and your left eye is on the same side as your left hand. Now, I suppose, you can find the left eye of the skull, or the place where the left eye has been. Have you found it?"

Here was a long pause. At length the negro asked, "Is de lef eye of de skull pon de same side as de lef hand of de skull, too?—cause de skull aint got not a bit ob a hand at all—nebber mind! I got de lef eye now—here de lef eye! what mus do wid it?"

"Let the beetle drop through it, as far as the string will reach—but be careful and not let go your hold of the string."

"All dat done, Massa Will; mighty easy ting for to put de bug fru de hole—look out for him dar below!"

During this colloquy no portion of Jupiter's person could be seen; but the beetle, which he had suffered to descend, was now visible at the end of the string, and glistened like a globe of burnished gold in the last rays of the setting sun, some of which still faintly illumined the eminence upon which we stood. The *scarabæus* hung quite clear of any branches, and, if allowed to fall, would have fallen at our feet. Legrand immediately took the scythe, and cleared with it a circular space, three or four yards in diameter, just beneath the insect, and, having accomplished this, ordered Jupiter to let go the string and come down from the tree.

Driving a peg, with great nicety, into the ground at the precise spot where the beetle fell, my friend now produced from his pocket a tape measure. Fastening one end of this at that point of the trunk of the tree which was nearest the peg, he unrolled it till it reached the peg, and thence farther unrolled it, in the direction already established by the two points of the tree and the peg, for the distance of fifty feet—Jupiter clearing away the brambles with the scythe. At the spot thus attained a second peg was driven, and about this, as a center, a rude circle, about four feet in diameter, described. Taking now a spade himself, and giving one to Jupiter and one to me, Legrand begged us to set about digging as quickly as possible.

To speak the truth, I had no especial relish for such amusement at any time, and, at that particular moment, would most willingly have declined it; for the night was coming on, and I felt much fatigued with the exercise already taken; but I saw no mode of escape, and was fearful of disturbing my poor friend's equanimity by a refusal. Could I have depended, indeed, upon Jupiter's aid, I would have had no hesitation in attempting to get the lunatic home by force; but I was too well assured of the old negro's disposition to hope that he would assist me, under any circumstances, in a personal contest with his master. I made no doubt that the latter had been infected with some of the innumerable

Southern superstitions about money buried, and that his fantasy had received confirmation by the finding of the *scarabæus*, or, perhaps, by Jupiter's obstinacy in maintaining it to be "a bug of real gold." A mind disposed to lunacy would readily be led away by such suggestions, especially if chiming in with favorite preconceived ideas; and then I called to mind the poor fellow's speech about the beetle's being the "index of his fortune." Upon the whole, I was sadly vexed and puzzled, but at length I concluded to make a virtue of necessity—to dig with a good will, and thus the sooner to convince the visionary, by ocular demonstration, of the fallacy of the opinions he entertained.

The lanterns having been lit, we all fell to work with a zeal worthy a more rational cause; and, as the glare fell upon our persons and implements, I could not help thinking how picturesque a group we composed, and how strange and suspicious our labors must have appeared to any interloper who, by chance, might have stumbled upon our whereabouts.

We dug very steadily for two hours. Little was said; and our chief embarrassment lay in the yelpings of the dog, who took exceeding interest in our proceedings. He, at length, became so obstreperous that we grew fearful of his giving the alarm to some stragglers in the vicinity; or, rather, this was the apprehension of Legrand; for myself, I should have rejoiced at any interruption which might have enabled me to get the wanderer home. The noise was, at length, very effectually silenced by Jupiter, who, getting out of the hole with a dogged air of deliberation, tied the brute's mouth up with one of his suspenders, and then returned, with a grave chuckle, to his task.

When the time mentioned had expired, we had reached a depth of five feet, and yet no signs of any treasure became manifest. A general pause ensued, and I began to hope that the farce was at an end. Legrand, however, although evidently much disconcerted, wiped his brow thoughtfully and recommenced. We had excavated the entire circle of

four feet diameter, and now we slightly enlarged the limit, and went to the farther depth of two feet. Still nothing appeared. The gold seeker, whom I sincerely pitied, at length clambered from the pit, with the bitterest disappointment imprinted upon every feature, and proceeded, slowly and reluctantly, to put on his coat, which he had thrown off at the beginning of his labor. In the meantime I made no remark. Jupiter, at a signal from his master, began to gather up his tools. This done, and the dog having been unmuzzled, we turned in profound silence towards home.

We had taken, perhaps, a dozen steps in this direction, when, with a loud oath, Legrand strode up to Jupiter, and seized him by the collar. The astonished negro opened his eyes and mouth to the fullest extent, let fall the spades, and fell upon his knees.

"You scoundrel," said Legrand, hissing out the syllables from between his clenched teeth—"you infernal black villain!—speak, I tell you!—answer me this instant, without prevarication!—which—*which* is your left eye?"

"Oh, my golly, Massa Will! aint dis here my lef eye for sartain?" roared the terrified Jupiter, placing his hand upon his *right* organ of vision, and holding it there with a desperate pertinacity, as if in immediate dread of his master's attempt at a gouge.

"I thought so! I knew it! Hurrah!" vociferated Legrand, letting the negro go, and executing a series of curvets and caracoles, much to the astonishment of his valet, who, arising from his knees, looked mutely from his master to myself, and then from myself to his master.

"Come! we must go back," said the latter, "the game's not up yet"; and he again led the way to the tulip tree.

"Jupiter," said he, when we reached its foot, "come here! Was the skull nailed to the limb with the face outward, or with the face to the limb?"

"De face was out, massa, so dat de crows could get at de eyes good, widout any trouble."

“Well, then, was it this eye or that through which you dropped the beetle?” here Legrand touched each of Jupiter’s eyes.

“’Twas dis eye, Massa—de lef eye—jis as you tell me,” and here it was his right eye that the negro indicated.

“That will do—we must try it again.”

Here my friend, about whose madness I now saw, or fancied that I saw, certain indications of method, removed the peg which marked the spot where the beetle fell, to a spot about three inches to the westward of its former position. Taking, now, the tape measure from the nearest point of the trunk to the peg, as before, and continuing the extension in a straight line to the distance of fifty feet, a spot was indicated, removed, by several yards, from the point at which we had been digging.

Around the new position a circle, somewhat larger than in the former instance, was now described, and we again set to work with the spades. I was dreadfully weary, but, scarcely understanding what had occasioned the change in my thoughts, I felt no longer any great aversion from the labor imposed. I had become most unaccountably interested—nay, even excited. Perhaps there was something, amid all the extravagant demeanor of Legrand—some air of forethought, or of deliberation—which impressed me. I dug eagerly, and now and then caught myself actually looking, with something that very much resembled expectation, for the fancied treasure, the vision of which had demented my unfortunate companion. At a period when such vagaries of thought most fully possessed me, and when we had been at work perhaps an hour and a half, we were again interrupted by the violent howlings of the dog. His uneasiness, in the first instance, had been evidently but the result of playfulness or caprice, but he now assumed a bitter and serious tone. Upon Jupiter’s again attempting to muzzle him, he made furious resistance, and, leaping into the hole, tore up the mold frantically with his claws. In a few seconds he had

uncovered a mass of human bones, forming two complete skeletons, intermingled with several buttons of metal, and what appeared to be the dust of decayed woolen. One or two strokes of a spade upturned the blade of a large Spanish knife, and, as we dug farther, three or four loose pieces of gold and silver coin came to light.

At sight of these the joy of Jupiter could scarcely be restrained, but the countenance of his master wore an air of extreme disappointment. He urged us, however, to continue our exertions, and the words were hardly uttered when I stumbled and fell forward, having caught the toe of my boot in a large ring of iron that lay half buried in the loose earth.

We now worked in earnest, and never did I pass ten minutes of more intense excitement. During this interval we had fairly unearthed an oblong chest of wood, which, from its perfect preservation and wonderful hardness, had plainly been subjected to some mineralizing process—perhaps that of the bichloride of mercury. This box was three feet and a half long, three feet broad, and two and a half feet deep. It was firmly secured by bands of wrought iron, riveted, and forming a kind of trelliswork over the whole. On each side of the chest, near the top, were three rings of iron—six in all—by means of which a firm hold could be obtained by six persons. Our utmost united endeavors served only to disturb the coffer very slightly in its bed. We at once saw the impossibility of removing so great a weight. Luckily, the sole fastenings of the lid consisted of two sliding bolts. These we drew back—trembling and panting with anxiety. In an instant, a treasure of incalculable value lay gleaming before us. As the rays of the lanterns fell within the pit, there flashed upwards, from a confused heap of gold and of jewels, a glow and a glare that absolutely dazzled our eyes.

I shall not pretend to describe the feelings with which I gazed. Amazement was, of course, predominant. Legrand appeared exhausted with excitement, and spoke very few words. Jupiter's countenance wore, for some minutes, as

deadly a pallor as it is possible, in the nature of things, for any negro's visage to assume. He seemed stupefied—thunder-stricken. Presently he fell upon his knees in the pit, and, burying his naked arms up to the elbows in gold, let them there remain, as if enjoying the luxury of a bath. At length, with a deep sigh, he exclaimed, as if in a soliloquy:

“And dis all cum ob de goolebug! de putty goolebug! de poor little goolebug, what I boosed in dat sabage kind ob style! Aint you shamed ob yourself, nigger?—answer me dat!”

It became necessary, at last, that I should arouse both master and valet to the expediency of removing the treasure. It was growing late, and it behooved us to make exertion, that we might get everything housed before daylight. It was difficult to say what should be done, and much time was spent in deliberation—so confused were the ideas of all. We finally lightened the box by removing two thirds of its contents, when we were enabled, with some trouble, to raise it from the hole. The articles taken out were deposited among the brambles, and the dog left to guard them, with strict orders from Jupiter neither, upon any pretense, to stir from the spot, nor to open his mouth until our return. We then hurriedly made for home with the chest; reaching the hut in safety, but after excessive toil, at one o'clock in the morning. Worn out as we were, it was not in human nature to do more just now. We rested until two, and had supper; starting for the hills immediately afterwards, armed with three stout sacks, which by good luck were upon the premises. A little before four we arrived at the pit, divided the remainder of the booty, as equally as might be, among us, and, leaving the holes unfilled, again set out for the hut, at which, for the second time, we deposited our golden burdens, just as the first streaks of the dawn gleamed from over the tree tops in the east.

We were now thoroughly broken down; but the intense excitement of the time denied us repose. After an unquiet

slumber of some three or four hours' duration, we arose, as if by preconcert, to make examination of our treasure.

The chest had been full to the brim, and we spent the whole day, and the greater part of the next night, in a scrutiny of its contents. There had been nothing like order or arrangement. Everything had been heaped in promiscuously. Having assorted all with care, we found ourselves possessed of even vaster wealth than we had at first supposed. In coin there was rather more than four hundred and fifty thousand dollars: estimating the value of the pieces, as accurately as we could, by the tables of the period. There was not a particle of silver. All was gold of antique date and of great variety: French, Spanish, and German money, with a few English guineas, and some counters of which we had never seen specimens before. There were several very large and heavy coins, so worn that we could make nothing of their inscriptions. There was no American money. The value of the jewels we found more difficulty in estimating. There were diamonds—some of them exceedingly large and fine—a hundred and ten in all, and not one of them small; eighteen rubies of remarkable brilliancy; three hundred and ten emeralds, all very beautiful; and twenty-one sapphires, with an opal. These stones had all been broken from their settings and thrown loose in the chest. The settings themselves, which we picked out from among the other gold, appeared to have been beaten up with hammers, as if to prevent identification. Besides all this, there was a vast quantity of solid gold ornaments: nearly two hundred massive finger and earrings; rich chains—thirty of these, if I remember; eighty-three very large and heavy crucifixes; five gold censers of great value; a prodigious golden punch bowl, ornamented with richly chased vine leaves and Bacchanalian figures; with two sword handles exquisitely embossed, and many other articles which I cannot recollect. The weight of these valuables exceeded three hundred and fifty pounds avoirdupois; and in this estimate I have not included one hundred

and ninety-seven superb gold watches; three of the number being worth each five hundred dollars, if one. Many of them were very old, and as timekeepers valueless, the works having suffered more or less from corrosion; but all were richly jeweled and in cases of great worth. We estimated the entire contents of the chest, that night, at a million and a half of dollars; and, upon the subsequent disposal of the trinkets and jewels (a few being retained for our own use), it was found that we had greatly undervalued the treasure.

When, at length, we had concluded our examination, and the intense excitement of the time had in some measure subsided, Legrand, who saw that I was dying with impatience for a solution of this most extraordinary riddle, entered into a full detail of all the circumstances connected with it.

"You remember," said he, "the night when I handed you the rough sketch I had made of the *scarabæus*. You recollect, also, that I became quite vexed at you for insisting that my drawing resembled a death's-head. When you first made this assertion I thought you were jesting; but afterwards I called to mind the peculiar spots on the back of the insect, and admitted to myself that your remark had some little foundation in fact. Still, the sneer at my graphic powers irritated me—for I am considered a good artist—and, therefore, when you handed me the scrap of parchment, I was about to crumple it up and throw it angrily into the fire."

"The scrap of paper, you mean," said I.

"No: it had much of the appearance of paper, and at first I supposed it to be such, but when I came to draw upon it, I discovered it, at once, to be a piece of very thin parchment. It was quite dirty, you remember. Well, as I was in the very act of crumpling it up, my glance fell upon the sketch at which you had been looking, and you may imagine my astonishment when I perceived, in fact, the figure of a death's-head just where, it seemed to me, I had made the drawing of the beetle. For a moment I was too much amazed to think with accuracy. I knew that my design was very different

in detail from this—although there was a certain similarity in general outline. Presently I took a candle, and, seating myself at the other end of the room, proceeded to scrutinize the parchment more closely. Upon turning it over, I saw my own sketch upon the reverse, just as I had made it. My first idea, now, was mere surprise at the really remarkable similarity of outline—at the singular coincidence involved in the fact that, unknown to me, there should have been a skull upon the other side of the parchment, immediately beneath my figure of the *scarabæus*, and that this skull, not only in outline, but in size, should so closely resemble my drawing. I say the singularity of this coincidence absolutely stupefied me for a time. This is the usual effect of such coincidences. The mind struggles to establish a connection—a sequence of cause and effect—and, being unable to do so, suffers a species of temporary paralysis. But, when I recovered from this stupor, there dawned upon me gradually a conviction which startled me even far more than the coincidence. I began distinctly, positively, to remember that there had been *no* drawing on the parchment when I made my sketch of the *scarabæus*. I became perfectly certain of this; for I recollected turning up first one side and then the other, in search of the cleanest spot. Had the skull been there then, of course I could not have failed to notice it. Here was indeed a mystery which I felt it impossible to explain; but, even at that early moment, there seemed to glimmer, faintly, within the most remote and secret chambers of my intellect, a glowworm-like conception of that truth which last night's adventure brought to so magnificent a demonstration. I arose at once, and, putting the parchment securely away, dismissed all farther reflection until I should be alone.

“When you had gone, and when Jupiter was fast asleep, I betook myself to a more methodical investigation of the affair. In the first place I considered the manner in which the parchment had come into my possession. The spot where we discovered the *scarabæus* was on the coast of the

mainland, about a mile eastward of the island, and but a short distance above high-water mark. Upon my taking hold of it, it gave me a sharp bite, which caused me to let it drop. Jupiter, with his accustomed caution, before seizing the insect, which had flown towards him looked about him for a leaf, or something of that nature, by which to take hold of it. It was at this moment that his eyes, and mine also, fell upon the scrap of parchment, which I then supposed to be paper. It was lying half-buried in the sand, a corner sticking up. Near the spot where we found it, I observed the remnants of the hull of what appeared to have been a ship's longboat. The wreck seemed to have been there for a very great while; for the resemblance to boat timbers could scarcely be traced.

“Well, Jupiter picked up the parchment, wrapped the beetle in it, and gave it to me. Soon afterwards we turned to go home, and on the way met Lieutenant G——. I showed him the insect, and he begged me to let him take it to the fort. On my consenting, he thrust it forthwith into his waistcoat pocket, without the parchment in which it had been wrapped, and which I had continued to hold in my hand during his inspection. Perhaps he dreaded my changing my mind, and thought it best to make sure of the prize at once—you know how enthusiastic he is on all subjects connected with Natural History. At the same time, without being conscious of it, I must have deposited the parchment in my own pocket.

“You remember that when I went to the table, for the purpose of making a sketch of the beetle, I found no paper where it was usually kept. I looked in the drawer, and found none there. I searched my pockets, hoping to find an old letter, and then my hand fell upon the parchment. I thus detail the precise mode in which it came into my possession; for the circumstances impressed me with peculiar force.

“No doubt you will think me fanciful—but I had already established a kind of *connection*. I had put together two links of a great chain. There was a boat lying on a seacoast, and not far from the boat was a parchment—not a paper—

with a skull depicted on it. You will, of course, ask 'where is the connection?' I reply that the skull, or death's-head, is the well-known emblem of the pirate. The flag of the death's-head is hoisted in all engagements.

"I have said that the scrap was parchment, and not paper. Parchment is durable—almost imperishable. Matters of little moment are rarely consigned to parchment; since, for the mere ordinary purposes of drawing or writing, it is not nearly so well adapted as paper. This reflection suggested some meaning—some relevancy—in the death's-head. I did not fail to observe, also, the *form* of the parchment. Although one of its corners had been, by some accident, destroyed, it could be seen that the original form was oblong. It was just such a slip, indeed, as might have been chosen for a memorandum—for a record of something to be long remembered and carefully preserved."

"But," I interposed, "you say that the skull was *not* upon the parchment when you made the drawing of the beetle. How then do you trace any connection between the boat and the skull—since this latter, according to your own admission, must have been designed (God only knows how or by whom) at some period subsequent to your sketching the *scarabæus*?"

"Ah, hereupon turns the whole mystery; although the secret, at this point, I had comparatively little difficulty in solving. My steps were sure, and could afford but a single result. I reasoned, for example, thus: When I drew the *scarabæus*, there was no skull apparent on the parchment. When I had completed the drawing I gave it to you, and observed you narrowly until you returned it. *You*, therefore, did not design the skull, and no one else was present to do it. Then it was not done by human agency. And nevertheless it was done.

"At this stage of my reflections I endeavored to remember, and *did* remember, with entire distinctness, every incident which occurred about the period in question. The weather was chilly (O rare and happy accident!), and a fire was

blazing on the hearth. I was heated with exercise and sat near the table. You, however, had drawn a chair close to the chimney. Just as I placed the parchment in your hand, and as you were in the act of inspecting it, Wolf, the Newfoundland, entered, and leaped upon your shoulders. With your left hand you caressed him and kept him off, while your right, holding the parchment, was permitted to fall listlessly between your knees, and in close proximity to the fire. At one moment I thought the blaze had caught it, and was about to caution you, but, before I could speak, you had withdrawn it, and were engaged in its examination. When I considered all these particulars, I doubted not for a moment that *heat* had been the agent in bringing to light, on the parchment, the skull which I saw designed on it. You are well aware that chemical preparations exist, and have existed time out of mind, by means of which it is possible to write on either paper or vellum, so that the characters shall become visible only when subjected to the action of fire. Zaffer, digested in *aqua regia*, and diluted with four times its weight of water, is sometimes employed; a green tint results. The regulus of cobalt, dissolved in spirit of niter, gives a red. These colors disappear at longer or shorter intervals after the material written upon cools, but again become apparent upon the reapplication of heat.

“I now scrutinized the death’s-head with care. Its outer edges—the edges of the drawing nearest the edge of the vellum—were far more *distinct* than the others. It was clear that the action of the caloric had been imperfect or unequal. I immediately kindled a fire, and subjected every portion of the parchment to a glowing heat. At first, the only effect was the strengthening of the faint lines in the skull; but, on persevering in the experiment, there became visible at the corner of the slip, diagonally opposite to the spot in which the death’s-head was delineated, the figure of what I at first supposed to be a goat. A closer scrutiny, however, satisfied me that it was intended for a kid.”

“Ha! ha!” said I, “to be sure I have no right to laugh at you—a million and a half of money is too serious a matter for mirth—but you are not about to establish a third link in your chain: you will not find any especial connection between your pirates and a goat; pirates, you know, have nothing to do with goats; they appertain to the farming interest.”

“But I have just said that the figure was *not* that of a goat.”

“Well, a kid, then—pretty much the same thing.”

“Pretty much, but not altogether,” said Legrand. “You may have heard of one *Captain Kidd*.” I at once looked on the figure of the animal as a kind of punning or hieroglyphical signature. I say signature, because its position on the vellum suggested this idea. The death’s-head at the corner diagonally opposite had, in the same manner, the air of a stamp, or seal. But I was sorely put out by the absence of all else—of the body to my imagined instrument—of the text for my context.”

“I presume you expected to find a letter between the stamp and the signature.”

“Something of that kind. The fact is, I felt irresistibly impressed with a presentiment of some vast good fortune impending. I can scarcely say why. Perhaps, after all, it was rather a desire than an actual belief;—but do you know that Jupiter’s silly words, about the bug being of solid gold, had a remarkable effect on my fancy? And then the series of accidents and coincidences—these were so *very* extraordinary. Do you observe how mere an accident it was that these events should have occurred on the *sole* day of all the year in which it has been, or may be, sufficiently cool for fire, and that without the fire, or without the intervention of the dog at the precise moment in which he appeared, I should never have become aware of the death’s-head, and so never the possessor of the treasure?”

“But proceed—I am all impatience.”

“Well; you have heard, of course, the many stories current—the thousand vague rumors afloat about money buried,

somewhere on the Atlantic coast, by Kidd and his associates. These rumors must have had some foundation in fact. And that the rumors have existed so long and so continuously, could have resulted, it appeared to me, only from the circumstance of the buried treasure still *remaining* entombed. Had Kidd concealed his plunder for a time, and afterwards reclaimed it, the rumors would scarcely have reached us in their present unvarying form. You will observe that the stories told are all about money seekers, not about money finders. Had the pirate recovered his money, there the affair would have dropped. It seemed to me that some accident—say the loss of a memorandum indicating its locality—had deprived him of the means of recovering it, and that this accident had become known to his followers, who otherwise might never have heard that treasure had been concealed at all, and who, busying themselves in vain, because unguided, attempts to regain it, had given first birth, and then universal currency, to the reports which are now so common. Have you ever heard of any important treasure being unearthed along the coast?"

"Never."

"But that Kidd's accumulations were immense is well known. I took it for granted, therefore, that the earth still held them; and you will scarcely be surprised when I tell you that I felt a hope, nearly amounting to certainty, that the parchment so strangely found involved a lost record of the place of deposit."

"But how did you proceed?"

"I held the vellum again to the fire, after increasing the heat, but nothing appeared. I now thought it possible that the coating of dirt might have something to do with the failure; so I carefully rinsed the parchment by pouring warm water over it, and, having done this, I placed it in a tin pan, with the skull downwards, and put the pan upon a furnace of lighted charcoal. In a few minutes, the pan having become thoroughly heated, I removed the slip, and, to my inexpressible joy, found it spotted, in several places, with what

appeared to be figures arranged in lines. Again I placed it in the pan, and suffered it to remain another minute. Upon taking it off, the whole was just as you see it now."

Here Legrand, having reheated the parchment, submitted it to my inspection. The following characters were rudely traced, in a red tint, between the death's-head and the goat:—

53†††305))6*;4826)4†.)4†);806*;48†8¶(60)85;;]8*;:†*8†83(88)5*†;4
6(;88*96*?;8)*†(;485);5*†2:*†(;4956*2(5*-4)8¶8*;4069285);6†8)4††
;1(†9;48081;8:8†1;48†85;4)485†528806*81(†9;48;(88;4(†?34;48)4†;16
1;:188;†?;

"But," said I, returning him the slip, "I am as much in the dark as ever. Were all the jewels of Golconda awaiting me on my solution of this enigma, I am quite sure that I should be unable to earn them."

"And yet," said Legrand, "the solution is by no means so difficult as you might be led to imagine from the first hasty inspection of the characters. These characters, as any one might readily guess, form a cipher—that is to say, they convey a meaning; but then, from what is known of Kidd, I could not suppose him capable of constructing any of the more abstruse cryptographs." I made up my mind, at once, that this was of a simple species—such, however, as would appear, to the crude intellect of the sailor, absolutely insoluble without the key."

"And you really solved it?"

"Readily; I have solved others of an abstruseness ten thousand times greater. Circumstances, and a certain bias of mind, have led me to take interest in such riddles, and it may well be doubted whether human ingenuity can construct an enigma of the kind which human ingenuity may not, by proper application, resolve. In fact, having once established connected and legible characters, I scarcely gave a thought to the mere difficulty of developing their import.

"In the present case—indeed in all cases of secret writing—the first question regards the *language* of the cipher; for the

principles of solution, so far, especially, as the more simple ciphers are concerned, depend on, and are varied by, the genius of the particular idiom. In general, there is no alternative but experiment (directed by probabilities) of every tongue known to him who attempts the solution, until the true one be attained. But, with the cipher now before us, all difficulty is removed by the signature. The pun upon the word 'Kidd' is appreciable in no other language than the English. But for this consideration I should have begun my attempts with the Spanish and French, as the tongues in which a secret of this kind would most naturally have been written by a pirate of the Spanish main. As it was, I assumed the cryptograph to be English.

"You observe there are no divisions between the words. Had there been divisions, the task would have been comparatively easy. In such case I should have commenced with a collation and analysis of the shorter words, and, had a word of a single letter occurred, as is most likely (*a* or *I*, for example), I should have considered the solution as assured. But, there being no division, my first step was to ascertain the predominant letters, as well as the least frequent. Counting all, I constructed a table, thus:

Of the character 8 there are 33

	;	"	26
	4	"	19
	‡)	"	16
	*	"	13
	5	"	12
	6	"	11
	†1	"	8
	o	"	6
	92	"	5
	:3	"	4
	?	"	3
	•	"	2
		"	2
]—.	"	1

“Now, in English, the letter which most frequently occurs is *e*. Afterwards the succession runs thus: *a o i d h n r s t u y c f g l m w b k p q x z*. *E* predominates, however, so remarkably that an individual sentence of any length is rarely seen, in which it is not the prevailing character.

“Here, then, we have, in the very beginning, the groundwork for something more than a mere guess. The general use which may be made of the table is obvious—but, in this particular cipher, we shall only very partially require its aid. As our predominant character is 8, we will commence by assuming it as the *e* of the natural alphabet. To verify the supposition, let us observe if the 8 be seen often in couples—for *e* is doubled with great frequency in English—in such words, for example, as ‘meet,’ ‘fleet,’ ‘speed,’ ‘seen,’ ‘been,’ ‘agree,’ etc. In the present instance we see it doubled no less than five times, although the cryptograph is brief.

“Let us assume 8, then, as *e*. Now, of all *words* in the language, ‘the’ is most usual; let us see, therefore, whether there are not repetitions of any three characters, in the same order of collocation, the last of them being 8. If we discover repetitions of such letters, so arranged, they will most probably represent the word ‘the.’ On inspection, we find no less than seven such arrangements, the characters being ;48. We may, therefore, assume that the semicolon represents *t*, that 4 represents *h*, and that 8 represents *e*—the last being now well confirmed. Thus a great step has been taken.

“But, having established a single word, we are enabled to establish a vastly important point; that is to say, several commencements and terminations of other words. Let us refer, for example, to the last instance but one, in which the combination ;48 occurs—not far from the end of the cipher. We know that the semicolon immediately ensuing is the commencement of a word, and, of the six characters succeeding this ‘the,’ we are cognizant of no less than five. Let us

set these characters down, thus, by the letters we know them to represent, leaving a space for the unknown—

t eeth.

“Here we are enabled, at once, to discard the ‘*th*,’ as forming no portion of the word commencing with the first *t*; since, by experiment of the entire alphabet for a letter adapted to the vacancy, we perceive that no word can be formed of which this *th* can be a part. We are thus narrowed into

t ee,

and, going through the alphabet, if necessary, as before, we arrive at the word ‘tree’ as the sole possible reading. We thus gain another letter, *r*, represented by (, with the words ‘the tree’ in juxtaposition.

“Looking beyond these words, for a short distance, we again see the combination ;48, and employ it by way of *termination* to what immediately precedes. We have thus this arrangement:

the tree ;4(‡?34 the,

or, substituting the natural letters, where known, it reads thus:

the tree thr †?3h the.

“Now, if, in place of the unknown characters, we leave blank spaces, or substitute dots, we read thus:

the tree thr . . . h the,

when the word ‘*through*’ makes itself evident at once. But this discovery gives us three new letters, *o*, *u* and *g*, represented by ‡, ? and 3.

“Looking now, narrowly, through the cipher for combinations of known characters, we find, not very far from the beginning, this arrangement:

83(88, or egree,

which, plainly, is the conclusion of the word ‘degree,’ and gives us another letter, *d*, represented by †.

“Four letters beyond the word ‘degree,’ we perceive the combination

;46(;88*

“Translating the known characters, and representing the unknown by dots, as before, we read thus:

th . rtee .

an arrangement immediately suggestive of the word ‘thirteen,’ and again furnishing us with two new characters, *i* and *n*, represented by 6 and *.

“Referring, now, to the beginning of the cryptograph, we find the combination,

53††.

“Translating as before, we obtain

good,

which assures us that the first letter is *A*, and that the first two words are ‘A good.’

“To avoid confusion, it is now time that we arrange our key, as far as discovered, in a tabular form. It will stand thus:

5	represents	a
†	“	d
8	“	e
3	“	g
4	“	h
6	“	i
*	“	n
‡	“	o
(“	r
;	“	t

“We have, therefore, no less than ten of the most important letters represented, and it will be unnecessary to proceed with the details of the solution. I have said enough to convince you that ciphers of this nature are readily soluble, and

to give you some insight into the rationale of their development. But be assured that the specimen before us appertains to the very simplest species of cryptograph. It now only remains to give you the full translation of the characters upon the parchment, as unriddled. Here it is:

“*“A good glass in the bishop’s hostel in the devil’s seat twenty-one degrees and thirteen minutes northeast and by north main branch seventh limb east side shoot from the left eye of the death’s-head a bee line from the tree through the shot fifty feet out.”*”

“But,” said I, “the enigma seems still in as bad a condition as ever. How is it possible to extort a meaning from all this jargon about ‘devil’s seats,’ ‘death’s-head,’ and ‘bishop’s hostel’?”

“I confess,” replied Legrand, “that the matter still wears a serious aspect, when regarded with a casual glance. My first endeavor was to divide the sentence into the natural division intended by the cryptographer.”

“You mean, to punctuate it?”

“Something of that kind.”

“But how is it possible to effect this?”

“I reflected that it had been a *point* with the writer to run his words together without division, so as to increase the difficulty of solution. Now, a not over-acute man, in pursuing such an object, would be nearly certain to overdo the matter. When, in the course of his composition, he arrived at a break in his subject which would naturally require a pause, or a point, he would be exceedingly apt to run his characters, at this place, more than usually close together. If you will observe the MS., in the present instance, you will easily detect five such cases of unusual crowding. Acting on this hint, I made the division thus:

“*“A good glass in the bishop’s hostel in the devil’s seat—twenty-one degrees and thirteen minutes—northeast and by north—main branch seventh limb east side—shoot from the left eye of the death’s-head—a bee line from the tree through the shot fifty feet out.”*”

“Even this division,” said I, “leaves me still in the dark.”

“It left me also in the dark,” replied Legrand, “for a few days; during which I made diligent inquiry, in the neighborhood of Sullivan’s Island, for any building which went by the name of the ‘Bishop’s Hotel’; for, of course, I dropped the obsolete word ‘hostel.’ Gaining no information on the subject, I was on the point of extending my sphere of search, and proceeding in a more systematic manner, when one morning it entered into my head, quite suddenly, that this ‘Bishop’s Hostel’ might have some reference to an old family, of the name of Bessop, which, time out of mind, had held possession of an ancient manorhouse, about four miles to the northward of the island. I accordingly went over to the plantation, and reinstated my inquiries among the older negroes of the place. At length one of the most aged of the women said that she had heard of such a place as *Bessop’s Castle*, and thought that she could guide me to it, but that it was not a castle, nor a tavern, but a high rock.

“I offered to pay her well for her trouble, and, after some demur, she consented to accompany me to the spot. We found it without much difficulty, when, dismissing her, I proceeded to examine the place. The ‘castle’ consisted of an irregular assemblage of cliffs and rocks—one of the latter being quite remarkable for its height as well as for its insulated and artificial appearance. I clambered to its apex, and then felt much at a loss as to what should be next done.

“While I was busied in reflection, my eyes fell on a narrow ledge in the eastern face of the rock, perhaps a yard below the summit upon which I stood. This ledge projected about eighteen inches, and was not more than a foot wide, while a niche in the cliff just above it gave it a rude resemblance to one of the hollow-backed chairs used by our ancestors. I made no doubt that here was the ‘devil’s seat’ alluded to in the MS., and now I seemed to grasp the full secret of the riddle.

“The ‘good glass,’ I knew, could have reference to nothing

but a telescope; for the word 'glass' is rarely employed in any other sense by seamen. Now here, I at once saw, was a telescope to be used, and a definite point of view, *admitting no variation*, from which to use it. Nor did I hesitate to believe that the phrases 'twenty-one degrees and thirteen minutes,' and 'north-east and by north,' were intended as directions for the leveling of the glass. Greatly excited by these discoveries, I hurried home, procured a telescope, and returned to the rock.

"I let myself down to the ledge, and found that it was impossible to retain a seat on it unless in one particular position. This fact confirmed my preconceived idea. I proceeded to use the glass. Of course, the 'twenty-one degrees and thirteen minutes' could allude to nothing but elevation above the visible horizon, since the horizontal direction was clearly indicated by the words, 'north-east and by north.' This latter direction I at once established by means of a pocket compass; then, pointing the glass as nearly at an angle of twenty-one degrees of elevation as I could do it by guess, I moved it cautiously up or down, until my attention was arrested by a circular rift or opening in the foliage of a large tree that overtopped its fellows in the distance. In the center of this rift I perceived a white spot, but could not, at first, distinguish what it was. Adjusting the focus of the telescope, I again looked, and now made it out to be a human skull.

"On this discovery I was so sanguine as to consider the enigma solved; for the phrase 'main branch, seventh limb, east side,' could refer only to the position of the skull on the tree, while 'shoot from the left eye of the death's-head' admitted, also, of but one interpretation, in regard to a search for buried treasure. I perceived that the design was to drop a bullet from the left eye of the skull, and that a bee line, or, in other words, a straight line, drawn from the nearest point of the trunk through the 'shot' (or the spot where the bullet fell), and thence extended to a distance of fifty feet, would

indicate a definite point—and beneath this point I thought it at least *possible* that a deposit of value lay concealed.”

“All this,” I said, “is exceedingly clear, and, although ingenious, still simple and explicit. When you left the Bishop’s Hotel, what then?”

“Why, having carefully taken the bearings of the tree, I turned homewards. The instant that I left ‘the devil’s seat,’ however, the circular rift vanished; nor could I get a glimpse of it afterwards, turn as I would. What seems to me the chief ingenuity in this whole business, is the fact (for repeated experiment has convinced me it *is* a fact) that the circular opening in question is visible from no other attainable point of view than that afforded by the narrow ledge on the face of the rock.

“In this expedition to the ‘Bishop’s Hotel’ I had been attended by Jupiter, who had no doubt observed, for some weeks past, the abstraction of my demeanor, and took especial care not to leave me alone. But on the next day, getting up very early, I contrived to give him the slip, and went into the hills in search of the tree. After much toil I found it. When I came home at night my valet proposed to give me a flogging. With the rest of the adventure I believe you are as well acquainted as myself.”

“I suppose,” said I, “you missed the spot, in the first attempt at digging, through Jupiter’s stupidity in letting the bug fall through the right instead of through the left eye of the skull.”

“Precisely. This mistake made a difference of about two inches and a half in the ‘shot’—that is to say, in the position of the peg nearest the tree; and had the treasure been *beneath* the ‘shot,’ the error would have been of little moment; but the ‘shot,’ together with the nearest point of the tree, were merely two points for the establishment of a line of direction; of course the error, however trivial in the beginning, increased as we proceeded with the line, and, by the time we had gone fifty feet, threw us quite off the scent. But for

my deep-seated convictions that treasure was here somewhere actually buried, we might have had all our labor in vain."

"I presume the fancy of *the skull*—of letting fall a bullet through the skull's eye—was suggested to Kidd by the piratical flag. No doubt he felt a kind of poetical consistency in recovering his money through this ominous insignium."

"Perhaps so; still, I cannot help thinking that common sense had quite as much to do with the matter as poetical consistency. To be visible from the 'devil's seat,' it was necessary that the object, if small, should be *white*; and there is nothing like your human skull for retaining and even increasing its whiteness under exposure to all vicissitudes of weather."

"But your grandiloquence, and your conduct in swinging the beetle—how excessively odd! I was sure you were mad. And why did you insist on letting fall the bug, instead of a bullet, from the skull?"

"Why, to be frank, I felt somewhat annoyed by your evident suspicions touching my sanity, and so resolved to punish you quietly, in my own way, by a little bit of sober mystification. For this reason I swung the beetle, and for this reason I let it fall from the tree. An observation of yours about its great weight suggested the latter idea."

"Yes, I perceive; and now there is only one point which puzzles me. What are we to make of the skeletons found in the hole?"

"That is a question I am no more able to answer than yourself. There seems, however, only one plausible way of accounting for them—and yet it is dreadful to believe in such atrocity as my suggestion would imply. It is clear that Kidd—if Kidd indeed secreted this treasure, which I doubt not—it is clear that he must have had assistance in the labor. But, the worst of this labor concluded, he may have thought it expedient to remove all participants in his secret. Perhaps a couple of blows with a mattock were sufficient, while his coadjutors were busy in the pit; perhaps it required a dozen—who shall tell?"

THE PURLOINED LETTER

Nil sapientiæ odiosius acumine nimio."

SENECA

AT Paris, just after dark one gusty evening in the autumn of 18—, I was enjoying the twofold luxury of meditation and a meerschaum, in company with my friend C. Auguste Dupin, in his little back library, or book closet, *au troisième*," No. 33, Rue Dunôt, Faubourg St. Germain. For one hour at least we had maintained a profound silence; while each, to any casual observer, might have seemed intently and exclusively occupied with the curling eddies of smoke that oppressed the atmosphere of the chamber. For myself, however, I was mentally discussing certain topics which had formed matter for conversation between us at an earlier period of the evening; I mean the affair of the Rue Morgue, and the mystery attending the murder of Marie Rogêt. I looked upon it, therefore, as something of a coincidence, when the door of our apartment was thrown open and admitted our old acquaintance, Monsieur G——, the Prefect of the Parisian police.

We gave him a hearty welcome; for there was nearly half as much of the entertaining as of the contemptible about the man, and we had not seen him for several years. We had been sitting in the dark, and Dupin now arose for the purpose of lighting a lamp, but sat down again, without doing so, upon G——'s saying that he had called to consult us, or rather to ask the opinion of my friend, about some official business which had occasioned a great deal of trouble.

"If it is any point requiring reflection," observed Dupin, as he forebore to enkindle the wick, "we shall examine it to better purpose in the dark."

"That is another of your odd notions," said the Prefect, who had a fashion of calling everything "odd" that was beyond his comprehension, and thus lived amid an absolute legion of "oddities."

"Very true," said Dupin, as he supplied his visitor with a pipe, and rolled towards him a comfortable chair.

"And what is the difficulty now?" I asked. "Nothing more in the assassination way, I hope?"

"Oh, no; nothing of that nature. The fact is, the business is *very* simple indeed, and I make no doubt that we can manage it sufficiently well ourselves; but then I thought Dupin would like to hear the details of it, because it is so excessively *odd*."

"Simple and odd," said Dupin.

"Why, yes; and not exactly that, either. The fact is, we have all been a good deal puzzled because the affair *is* so simple, and yet baffles us altogether."

"Perhaps it is the very simplicity of the thing which puts you at fault," said my friend.

"What nonsense you *do* talk!" replied the Prefect, laughing heartily.

"Perhaps the mystery is a little *too* plain," said Dupin.

"Oh, good Heavens! who ever heard of such an idea?"

"A little *too* self-evident."

"Ha! ha! ha!—ha! ha! ha!—ho! ho! ho!" roared our visitor, profoundly amused. "O Dupin, you will be the death of me yet!"

"And what, after all, *is* the matter on hand?" I asked.

"Why, I will tell you," replied the Prefect, as he gave a long, steady, and contemplative puff, and settled himself in his chair. "I will tell you in a few words; but, before I begin, let me caution you that this is an affair demanding the greatest secrecy, and that I should most probably lose the position I now hold were it known that I confided it to any one."

"Proceed," said I.

“Or not,” said Dupin.

“Well, then; I have received personal information, from a very high quarter, that a certain document of the last importance has been purloined from the royal apartments. The individual who purloined it is known; this beyond a doubt; he was seen to take it. It is known, also, that it still remains in his possession.”

“How is this known?” asked Dupin.

“It is clearly inferred,” replied the Prefect, “from the nature of the document, and from the nonappearance of certain results which would at once arise from its passing *out* of the robber’s possession; that is to say, from his employing it as he must design in the end to employ it.”

“Be a little more explicit,” I said.

“Well, I may venture so far as to say that the paper gives its holder a certain power in a certain quarter where such power is immensely valuable.” The Prefect was fond of the cant of diplomacy.

“Still I do not quite understand,” said Dupin.

“No? well; the disclosure of the document to a third person, who shall be nameless, would bring in question the honor of a personage of most exalted station; and this fact gives the holder of the document an ascendancy over the illustrious personage whose honor and peace are so jeopardized.”

“But this ascendancy,” I interposed, “would depend upon the robber’s knowledge of the loser’s knowledge of the robber. Who would dare—”

“The thief,” said G——, “is the Minister D——, who dares all things, those unbecoming as well as those becoming a man. The method of the theft was not less ingenious than bold. The document in question—a letter, to be frank—had been received by the personage robbed while alone in the royal boudoir. During its perusal she was suddenly interrupted by the entrance of the other exalted personage, from whom especially it was her wish to conceal it. After a hurried and vain endeavor to thrust it in a drawer, she was

forced to place it, open as it was, upon a table. The address, however, was uppermost, and, the contents thus unexposed, the letter escaped notice. At this juncture enters the Minister D—. His lynx eye immediately perceives the paper, recognizes the handwriting of the address, observes the confusion of the personage addressed, and fathoms her secret. After some business transactions, hurried through in his ordinary manner, he produces a letter somewhat similar to the one in question, opens it, pretends to read it, and then places it in close juxtaposition to the other. Again he converses for some fifteen minutes upon the public affairs. At length, in taking leave, he takes also from the table the letter to which he had no claim. Its rightful owner saw, but, of course, dared not call attention to the act, in the presence of the third personage, who stood at her elbow. The Minister decamped, leaving his own letter—one of no importance—upon the table.”

“Here, then,” said Dupin to me, “you have precisely what you demand to make the ascendancy complete—the robber’s knowledge of the loser’s knowledge of the robber.”

“Yes,” replied the Prefect; “and the power thus attained has, for some months past, been wielded, for political purposes, to a very dangerous extent. The personage robbed is more thoroughly convinced, every day, of the necessity of reclaiming her letter. But this, of course, cannot be done openly. In fine, driven to despair, she has committed the matter to me.”

“Than whom,” said Dupin, amid a perfect whirlwind of smoke, “no more sagacious agent could, I suppose, be desired, or even imagined.”

“You flatter me,” replied the Prefect; “but it is possible that some such opinion may have been entertained.”

“It is clear,” said I, “as you observe, that the letter is still in possession of the Minister; since it is this possession, and not any employment of the letter, which bestows the power. With the employment the power departs.”

“True,” said G—; “and upon this conviction I proceeded. My first care was to make thorough search of the Minister’s Hotel; and here my chief embarrassment lay in the necessity of searching without his knowledge. Beyond all things, I have been warned of the danger which would result from giving him reason to suspect our design.”

“But,” said I, “you are quite *au fait*¹ in these investigations. The Parisian police have done this thing often before.”

“Oh, yes; and for this reason I did not despair. The habits of the Minister gave me, too, a great advantage. He is frequently absent from home all night. His servants are by no means numerous. They sleep at a distance from their master’s apartment, and, being chiefly Neapolitans, are readily made drunk. I have keys, as you know, with which I can open any chamber or cabinet in Paris. For three months a night has not passed, during the greater part of which I have not been engaged, personally, in ransacking the D— Hotel. My honor is interested, and, to mention a great secret, the reward is enormous. So I did not abandon the search until I had become fully satisfied the thief is a more astute man than myself. I fancy that I have investigated every nook and corner of the premises in which it is possible that the paper can be concealed.”

“But is it not possible,” I suggested, “that although the letter may be in possession of the Minister, as it unquestionably is, he may have concealed it elsewhere than upon his own premises?”

“This is barely possible,” said Dupin. “The present peculiar condition of affairs at court, and especially of those intrigues in which D— is known to be involved, would render the instant availability of the document—its susceptibility of being produced at a moment’s notice—a point of nearly equal importance with its possession.”

“Its susceptibility of being produced?” said I.

“That is to say, of being *destroyed*,” said Dupin.

¹ “To the point”—expert.

"True," I observed; "the paper is clearly then upon the premises. As for its being upon the person of the Minister, we may consider that as out of the question."

"Entirely," said the Prefect. "He has been twice waylaid, as if by footpads, and his person rigorously searched under my own inspection."

"You might have spared yourself this trouble," said Dupin. "D——, I presume, is not altogether a fool, and, if not, must have anticipated these waylayings, as a matter of course."

"Not *altogether* a fool," said G——, "but then he's a poet, which I take to be only one remove from a fool."

"True," said Dupin, after a long and thoughtful whiff from his meerschaum, "although I have been guilty of certain doggerel myself."

"Suppose you detail," said I, "the particulars of your search."

"Why, the fact is, we took our time, and we searched *everywhere*. I have had long experience in these affairs. I took the entire building, room by room, devoting the nights of a whole week to each. We examined, first, the furniture of each apartment. We opened every possible drawer; and I presume you know that, to a properly trained police agent, such a thing as a *secret* drawer is impossible. Any man is a dolt who permits a 'secret' drawer to escape him in a search of this kind. The thing is *so* plain. There is a certain amount of bulk—of space—to be accounted for in every cabinet. Then we have accurate rules. The fiftieth part of a line could not escape us. After the cabinets we took the chairs. The cushions we probed with the fine long needles you have seen me employ. From the tables we removed the tops."

"Why so?"

"Sometimes the top of a table, or other similarly arranged piece of furniture, is removed by the person wishing to conceal an article; then the leg is excavated, the article deposited within the cavity, and the top replaced. The bottoms and tops of bedposts are employed in the same way."

“But could not the cavity be detected by sounding?” I asked.

“By no means, if, when the article is deposited, a sufficient wadding of cotton be placed around it. Besides, in our case we were obliged to proceed without noise.”

“But you could not have removed—you could not have taken to pieces *all* articles of furniture in which it would have been possible to make a deposit in the manner you mention. A letter may be compressed into a thin spiral roll, not differing much in shape or bulk from a large knitting needle, and in this form it might be inserted into the rung of a chair, for example. You did not take to pieces all the chairs?”

“Certainly not; but we did better—we examined the rungs of every chair in the Hotel, and indeed, the jointings of every description of furniture, by the aid of a most powerful microscope. Had there been any traces of recent disturbance we should not have failed to detect it instantly. A single grain of gimlet dust, for example, would have been as obvious as an apple. Any disorder in the gluing—any unusual gaping in the joints—would have sufficed to insure detection.”

“I presume you looked to the mirrors, between the boards and the plates, and you probed the beds and the bedclothes, as well as the curtains and carpets?”

“That, of course; and when we had absolutely completed every particle of the furniture in this way, then we examined the house itself. We divided its entire surface into compartments, which we numbered, so that none might be missed; then we scrutinized each individual square inch throughout the premises, including the two houses immediately adjoining, with the microscope, as before.”

“The two houses adjoining!” I exclaimed; “you must have had a great deal of trouble.”

“We had; but the reward offered is prodigious.”

“You include the *grounds* about the houses?”

“All the grounds are paved with bricks. They gave us

comparatively little trouble. We examined the moss between the bricks, and found it undisturbed."

"You looked among D——'s papers, of course, and into the books of the library?"

"Certainly; we opened every package and parcel; we not only opened every book, but we turned over every leaf in each volume, not contenting ourselves with a mere shake, according to the fashion of some of our police officers. We also measured the thickness of every book-cover, with the most accurate admeasurement, and applied to each the most jealous scrutiny of the microscope. Had any of the bindings been recently meddled with, it would have been utterly impossible that the fact should have escaped observation. Some five or six volumes, just from the hands of the binder, we carefully probed, longitudinally, with the needles."

"You explored the floors beneath the carpets?"

"Beyond doubt. We removed every carpet, and examined the boards with the microscope."

"And the paper on the walls?"

"Yes."

"You looked into the cellars?"

"We did."

"Then," I said, "you have been making a miscalculation, and the letter is *not* upon the premises, as you suppose."

"I fear you are right there," said the Prefect. "And now, Dupin, what would you advise me to do?"

"To make a thorough re-search of the premises."

"That is absolutely needless," replied G——. "I am not more sure that I breathe than I am that the letter is not at the Hotel."

"I have no better advice to give you," said Dupin.

"You have, of course, an accurate description of the letter?"

"Oh, yes!"—And here the Prefect, producing a memorandum book, proceeded to read aloud a minute account of the internal, and especially of the external appearance of the miss-

ing document. Soon after finishing the perusal of this description, he took his departure, more entirely depressed in spirits than I had ever known the good gentleman before.

In about a month afterwards he paid us another visit, and found us occupied very nearly as before. He took a pipe and a chair and entered into some ordinary conversation. At length I said,—

“Well, but, G——, what of the purloined letter? I presume you have at last made up your mind that there is no such thing as overreaching the Minister?”

“Confound him, say I—yes; I made the re-examination, however, as Dupin suggested—but it was all labor lost, as I knew it would be.”

“How much was the reward offered, did you say?” asked Dupin.

“Why, a very great deal—a *very* liberal reward—I don’t like to say how much, precisely; but one thing I *will* say, that I wouldn’t mind giving my individual check for fifty thousand francs to any one who could obtain me that letter. The fact is, it is becoming of more and more importance every day; and the reward has been lately doubled. If it were trebled, however, I could do no more than I have done.”

“Why, yes,” said Dupin, drawlingly, between the whiffs of his meerschaum, “I really—think, G——, you have not exerted yourself—to the utmost in this matter. You might—do a little more, I think, eh?”

“How?—in what way?”

“Why—puff, puff—you might—puff, puff—employ counsel in the matter, eh?—puff, puff, puff. Do you remember the story they tell of Abernethy?”

“No; hang Abernethy!”

“To be sure! hang him and welcome. But, once upon a time, a certain rich miser conceived the design of sponging upon this Abernethy for a medical opinion. Getting up, for this purpose, an ordinary conversation in a private com-

pany, he insinuated his case to the physician, as that of an imaginary individual.

“‘We will suppose,’ said the miser, ‘that his symptoms are such and such; now, doctor, what would *you* have directed him to take?’

“‘Take!’ said Abernethy, ‘why, take *advice*, to be sure.’”

“But,” said the Prefect, a little discomposed, “I am *perfectly* willing to take advice, and to pay for it. I would *really* give fifty thousand francs to any one who would aid me in the matter.”

“In that case,” replied Dupin, opening a drawer, and producing a check book, “you may as well fill me up a check for the amount mentioned. When you have signed it, I will hand you the letter.”

I was astounded. The Prefect appeared absolutely thunderstricken. For some minutes he remained speechless and motionless, looking incredulously at my friend with open mouth, and eyes that seemed starting from their sockets; then, apparently recovering himself in some measure, he seized a pen, and after several pauses and vacant stares, finally filled up and signed a check for fifty thousand francs, and handed it across the table to Dupin. The latter examined it carefully and deposited it in his pocketbook; then, unlocking an *escritoire*, took thence a letter and gave it to the Prefect. This functionary grasped it in a perfect agony of joy, opened it with a trembling hand, cast a rapid glance at its contents, and then, scrambling and struggling to the door, rushed at length unceremoniously from the room and from the house, without having uttered a syllable since Dupin had requested him to fill up the check.

When he had gone, my friend entered into some explanations.

“The Parisian police,” he said, “are exceedingly able in their way. They are persevering, ingenious, cunning, and thoroughly versed in the knowledge which their duties seem chiefly to demand. Thus, when G—— detailed to us his

mode of searching the premises at the Hotel D——, I felt entire confidence in his having made a satisfactory investigation—so far as his labors extended.”

“So far as his labors extended?” said I.

“Yes,” said Dupin. “The measures adopted were not only the best of their kind, but carried out to absolute perfection. Had the letter been deposited within the range of their search, these fellows would, beyond a question, have found it.”

I merely laughed—but he seemed quite serious in all that he said.

“The measures, then,” he continued, “were good in their kind, and well executed; their defect lay in their being inapplicable to the case, and to the man. A certain set of highly ingenious resources are, with the Prefect, a sort of Procrustean bed to which he forcibly adapts his designs. But he perpetually errs by being too deep or too shallow, for the matter in hand; and many a schoolboy is a better reasoner than he. I knew one about eight years of age, whose success at guessing in the game of ‘even and odd’ attracted universal admiration. This game is simple, and is played with marbles. One player holds in his hand a number of these toys, and demands of another whether that number is even or odd. If the guess is right, the guesser wins one; if wrong, he loses one. The boy to whom I allude won all the marbles of the school. Of course he had some principle of guessing; and this lay in mere observation and admeasurement of the astuteness of his opponents. For example, an arrant simpleton is his opponent, and, holding up his closed hand asks, ‘Are they even or odd?’ Our schoolboy replied ‘odd,’ and loses; but upon the second trial he wins, for he then says to himself, ‘The simpleton had them even upon the first trial, and his amount of cunning is just sufficient to make him have them odd upon the second; I will therefore guess odd’; he guesses odd, and wins. Now, with a simpleton a degree above the first he would have reasoned thus: ‘This fellow finds that in

the first instance I guessed odd, and, in the second, he will propose to himself, upon the first impulse, a simple variation from even to odd, as did the first simpleton; but then a second thought will suggest that this is too simple a variation, and finally he will decide upon putting it even as before. I will therefore guess even'; he guesses even, and wins. Now this mode of reasoning in the schoolboy, whom his fellows term 'lucky,'—what, in its last analysis, is it?"

"It is merely," I said, "an identification of the reasoner's intellect with that of his opponent."

"It is," said Dupin; "and, upon inquiring of the boy by what means he effected the *thorough* identification in which his success consisted, I received answer as follows: 'When I wish to find out how wise, or how stupid, or how good, or how wicked is any one, or what are his thoughts at the moment, I fashion the expression of my face, as accurately as possible, in accordance with the expression of his, and then wait to see what thoughts or sentiments arise in my mind or heart, as if to match or correspond with the expression.' This response of the schoolboy lies at the bottom of all the spurious profundity which has been attributed to Rochefoucauld," to La Bruyère," to Machiavelli," and to Campanella."

"And the identification," I said, "of the reasoner's intellect with that of his opponent, depends, if I understand you aright, upon the accuracy with which the opponent's intellect is admeasured."

"For its practical value it depends upon this," replied Dupin, "and the Prefect and his cohort fail so frequently, first, by default of this identification, and, secondly, by ill-admeasurement, or rather through non-admeasurement, of the intellect with which they are engaged. They consider only their *own* ideas of ingenuity; and, in searching for anything hidden, advert only to the modes in which *they* would have hidden it. They are right in this much—that their own ingenuity is a faithful representative of that of *the mass*:

but when the cunning of the individual felon is diverse in character from their own, the felon foils them, of course. This always happens when it is above their own, and very usually when it is below. They have no variation of principle in their investigations; at best, when urged by some unusual emergency—by some extraordinary reward—they extend or exaggerate their old modes of *practice*, without touching their principles. What, for example, in this case of D——, has been done to vary the principle of action? What is all this boring, and probing, and sounding, and scrutinizing with the microscope, and dividing the surface of the building into registered square inches—what is it all but an exaggeration of the *application* of the one principle or set of principles of search, which are based upon the one set of notions regarding human ingenuity, to which the Prefect, in the long routine of his duty, has been accustomed? Do you not see he has taken it for granted that *all* men proceed to conceal a letter,—not exactly in a gimlet hole bored in a chair leg—but, at least, in *some* out-of-the-way hole or corner suggested by the same tenor of thought which would urge a man to secrete a letter in a gimlet hole bored in a chair leg? And do you not see, also, that such *recherchés* nooks for concealment are adapted only for ordinary occasions and would be adopted only by ordinary intellects; for, in all cases of concealment, a disposal of the article concealed—a disposal of it in this *recherché* manner—is, in the very first instance, presumable and presumed; and thus its discovery depends, not at all upon the acumen, but altogether upon the mere care, patience, and determination of the seekers; and where the case is of importance—or, what amounts to the same thing in policial eyes, when the reward is of magnitude—the qualities in question have *never* been known to fail. You will now understand what I meant in suggesting that, had the purloined letter been hidden anywhere within the limits of the Prefect's examination—in other words, had the principle of its concealment been comprehended within the principles of the

Prefect—its discovery would have been a matter altogether beyond question. This functionary, however, has been thoroughly mystified; and the remote source of his defeat lies in the supposition that the Minister is a fool, because he has acquired renown as a poet. All fools are poets; this the Prefect *feels*; and he is merely guilty of a *non distributio medii*¹ in thence inferring that all poets are fools.”

“But is this really the poet?” I asked. “There are two brothers, I know; and both have attained reputation in letters. The Minister, I believe, has written learnedly on the Differential Calculus. He is a mathematician, and no poet.”

“You are mistaken; I know him well; he is both. As poet *and* mathematician, he would reason well; as mere mathematician, he could not have reasoned at all, and thus would have been at the mercy of the Prefect.”

“You surprise me,” I said, “by these opinions, which have been contradicted by the voice of the world. You do not mean to set at naught the well-digested idea of centuries. The mathematical reason has long been regarded as *the* reason *par excellence*.”

“*Il-y-a à parier,*”ⁿ replied Dupin, quoting from Chamfort, “*que toute idée publique, toute convention reçue, est une sottise, car elle a convenue au plus grand nombre.*” The mathematicians, I grant you, have done their best to promulgate the popular error to which you allude, and which is none the less an error for its promulgation as truth. With an art worthy a better cause, for example, they have insinuated the term ‘analysis’ into application to algebra. The French are the originators of this particular deception; but if a term is of any importance—if words derive any value from applicability—then ‘analysis’ conveys ‘algebra,’ about as much as, in Latin, ‘ambitus’ implies ‘ambition,’ ‘*religio,*’ ‘religion,’ or ‘*homines honesti,*’ a set of honorable men.”

“You have a quarrel on hand, I see,” said I, “with some of the algebraists of Paris; but proceed.”

¹ Fallacy.

“I dispute the availability, and thus the value, of that reason which is cultivated in any especial form other than the abstractly logical. I dispute, in particular, the reason educed by mathematical study. The mathematics are the science of form and quantity; mathematical reasoning is merely logic applied to observation upon form and quantity. The great error lies in supposing that even the truths of what is called *pure algebra* are abstract or general truths. And this error is so egregious that I am confounded at the universality with which it has been received. Mathematical axioms are *not* axioms of general truth. What is true of *relation*—of form and quantity—is often grossly false in regard to morals, for example. In this latter science it is very usually *untrue* that the aggregated parts are equal to the whole. In chemistry also the axiom fails. In the consideration of motive it fails; for two motives, each of a given value, have not, necessarily, a value when united, equal to the sum of their values apart. There are numerous other mathematical truths which are only truths within the limits of *relation*. But the mathematician argues, from his *finite truths*, through habit, as if they were of an absolutely general applicability—as the world indeed imagines them to be. Bryant,ⁿ in his very learned *Mythology*, mentions an analogous source of error, when he says that ‘although the Pagan fables are not believed, yet we forget ourselves continually, and make inferences from them as existing realities.’ With the algebraists, however, who are Pagans themselves, the ‘Pagan fables’ *are* believed, and the inferences are made, not so much through lapse of memory, as through an unaccountable addling of the brains. In short, I never yet encountered the mere mathematician who could be trusted out of equal roots, or one who did not clandestinely hold it as a point of his faith that x^2+px was absolutely and unconditionally equal to q . Say to one of these gentlemen, by way of experiment, if you please, that you believe occasions may occur where x^2+px is *not* altogether equal to q , and, having made him understand

what you mean, get out of his reach as speedily as convenient, for, beyond doubt, he will endeavor to knock you down.

“I mean to say,” continued Dupin, while I merely laughed at his last observations, “that if the Minister had been no more than a mathematician, the Prefect would have been under no necessity of giving me this check. I knew him, however, as both mathematician and poet, and my measures were adapted to his capacity, with reference to the circumstances by which he was surrounded. I knew him as courtier, too, and as a bold *intrigant*.¹ Such a man, I considered, could not fail to be aware of the ordinary policial modes of action. He could not have failed to anticipate—and events have proved that he did not fail to anticipate—the way-layings to which he was subjected. He must have foreseen, I reflected, the secret investigations of his premises. His frequent absences from home at night, which were hailed by the Prefect as certain aids to his success, I regarded only as ruses, to afford opportunity for thorough search to the police, and thus the sooner to impress them with the conviction to which G——, in fact, did finally arrive—the conviction that the letter was not upon the premises. I felt, also, that the whole train of thought, which I was at some pains in detailing to you just now, concerning the invariable principle of policial action in searches for articles concealed—I felt that this whole train of thought would necessarily pass through the mind of the Minister. It would imperatively lead him to despise all the ordinary *nooks* of concealment. *He* could not, I reflected, be so weak as not to see that the most intricate and remote recess of his Hotel would be as open as his commonest closets to the eyes, to the probes, to the gimlets, and to the microscopes of the Prefect. I saw, in fine, that he would be driven, as a matter of course, to *simplicity*, if not deliberately induced to it as a matter of choice. You will remember, perhaps, how desperately the Prefect laughed when I suggested, upon our first interview, that it

¹ Intriguer.

was just possible this mystery troubled him so much on account of its being so *very* self-evident."

"Yes," said I, "I remember his merriment well. I really thought he would have fallen into convulsions."

"The material world," continued Dupin, "abounds with very strict analogies to the immaterial; and thus some color of truth has been given to the rhetorical dogma, that metaphor, or simile, may be made to strengthen an argument, as well as to embellish a description. The principle of the *vis inertiae*,¹ for example, seems to be identical in physics and metaphysics. It is not more true in the former, that a large body is with more difficulty set in motion than a smaller one, and that its subsequent momentum is commensurate with this difficulty, than it is, in the latter, that intellects of the vaster capacity, while more forcible, more constant, and more eventful in their movements than those of inferior grade, are yet the less readily moved, and more embarrassed and full of hesitation in the first few steps of their progress. Again: have you ever noticed which of the street signs, over the shop doors, are the most attractive of attention?"

"I have never given the matter a thought," I said.

"There is a game of puzzles," he resumed, "which is played upon a map. One party playing requires another to find a given word—the name of town, river, state, or empire—any word, in short, upon the motley and perplexed surface of the chart. A novice in the game generally seeks to embarrass his opponents by giving them the most minutely lettered names; but the adept selects such words as stretch, in large characters, from one end of the chart to the other. These, like the overlargely lettered signs and placards of the street, escape observation by dint of being excessively obvious; and here the physical oversight is precisely analogous with the moral inapprehension by which the intellect suffers to pass unnoticed those considerations which are too obtrusively and too palpably self-evident. But this is a point,

¹ Force of inertia.

it appears, somewhat above or beneath the understanding of the Prefect. He never once thought it probable, or possible that the Minister had deposited the letter immediately beneath the nose of the whole world, by way of best preventing any portion of that world from perceiving it.

“But the more I reflected upon the daring, dashing, and discriminating ingenuity of D—; upon the fact that the document must always have been *at hand*, if he intended to use it to good purpose; and upon the decisive evidence, obtained by the Prefect, that it was not hidden within the limits of that dignitary’s ordinary search—the more satisfied I became that, to conceal this letter, the Minister has resorted to the comprehensive and sagacious expedient of not attempting to conceal it at all.

“Full of these ideas, I prepared myself with a pair of green spectacles, and called one fine morning, quite by accident, at the Ministerial Hotel. I found D— at home, yawning, lounging, and dawdling, as usual, and pretending to be in the last extremity of ennui. He is, perhaps, the most really energetic human being now alive—but that is only when nobody sees him.

“To be even with him, I complained of my weak eyes, and lamented the necessity of the spectacles, under cover of which I cautiously and thoroughly surveyed the apartment, while seemingly intent only upon the conversation of my host.

“I paid especial attention to a large writing table near which he sat, and upon which lay confusedly some miscellaneous letters and other papers, with one or two musical instruments and a few books. Here, however, after a long and very deliberate scrutiny, I saw nothing to excite particular suspicion.

“At length my eyes, in going the circuit of the room, fell upon a trumpery filigree card rack of pasteboard, that hung dangling by a dirty blue ribbon from a little brass knob just beneath the middle of the mantelpiece. In this rack, which had three or four compartments, were five or six visiting cards

and a solitary letter. This last was much soiled and crumpled. It was torn nearly in two, across the middle—as if a design, in the first instance, to tear it entirely up as worthless, had been altered, or stayed, in the second. It had a large black seal, bearing the D— cipher *very* conspicuously, and was addressed, in a diminutive female hand, to D—, the Minister himself. It was thrust carelessly, and even, as it seemed, contemptuously, into one of the upper divisions of the rack.

“No sooner had I glanced at this letter, than I concluded it to be that of which I was in search. To be sure, it was, to all appearance, radically different from the one of which the Prefect had read us so minute a description. Here the seal was large and black, with the D— cipher; there it was small and red, with the ducal arms of the S— family. Here, the address, to the Minister, was diminutive and feminine; there the superscription, to a certain royal personage, was markedly bold and decided; the size alone formed a point of correspondence. But then, the *radicalness* of these differences, which was excessive; the dirt; the soiled and torn condition of the paper, so inconsistent with the *true* methodical habits of D—, and so suggestive of a design to delude the beholder into an idea of the worthlessness of the document; these things, together with the hyperobtrusive situation of this document, full in the view of every visitor, and thus exactly in accordance with the conclusions to which I had previously arrived; these things, I say, were strongly corroborative of suspicion, in one who came with the intention to suspect.

“I protracted my visit as long as possible, and, while I maintained a most animated discussion with the Minister, upon a topic which I knew well had never failed to interest and excite him, I kept my attention really riveted upon the letter. In this examination, I committed to memory its external appearance and arrangement in the rack; and also fell, at length, upon a discovery which set at rest whatever trivial doubt I might have entertained. In scrutinizing the

edges of the paper, I observed them to be more *chafed* than seemed necessary. They presented the *broken* appearance which is manifested when a stiff paper, having been once folded and pressed with a folder, is refolded in a reversed direction, in the same creases or edges which had formed the original fold. This discovery was sufficient. It was clear to me that the letter had been turned, as a glove, inside out, redirected, and resealed. I bade the Minister good morning, and took my departure at once, leaving a gold snuffbox upon the table.

“The next morning I called for the snuffbox, when we resumed, quite eagerly, the conversation of the preceding day. While thus engaged, however, a loud report, as if of a pistol, was heard immediately beneath the windows of the Hotel, and was succeeded by a series of fearful screams, and the shoutings of a mob. D—— rushed to a casement, threw it open, and looked out. In the meantime, I stepped to the card rack, took the letter, put it in my pocket, and replaced it by a facsimile (so far as regards externals), which I had carefully prepared at my lodgings—imitating the D—— cipher, very readily, by means of a seal formed of bread.

“The disturbance in the street had been occasioned by the frantic behavior of a man with a musket. He had fired it among a crowd of women and children. It proved, however, to have been without ball, and the fellow was suffered to go his way as a lunatic or a drunkard. When he had gone, D—— came from the window, whither I had followed him immediately upon securing the object in view. Soon afterwards I bade him farewell. The pretended lunatic was a man in my own pay.”

“But what purpose had you,” I asked, “in replacing the letter by a facsimile? Would it not have been better, at the first visit, to have seized it openly, and departed?”

“D——,” replied Dupin, “is a desperate man, and a man of nerve. His Hotel, too, is not without attendants devoted to his interests. Had I made the wild attempt you suggest,

I might never have left the Ministerial presence alive. The good people of Paris might have heard of me no more. But I had an object apart from these considerations. You know my political prepossessions. In this matter, I act as a partisan of the lady concerned. For eighteen months the Minister has had her in his power. She has now him in hers—since, being unaware that the letter is not in his possession, he will proceed with his exactions as if it was. Thus will he inevitably commit himself, at once, to his political destruction. His downfall, too, will not be more precipitate than awkward. It is all very well to talk about the *facilis descensus Averni*;ⁿ but in all kinds of climbing, as Catalani said of singing, it is far more easy to get up than to come down. In the present instance I have no sympathy—at least no pity—for him who descends. He is that *monstrum horrendum*,ⁿ an unprincipled man of genius. I confess, however, that I should like very well to know the precise character of his thoughts, when, being defied by her whom the Prefect terms ‘a certain personage,’ he is reduced to opening the letter which I left for him in the card rack.”

“How? Did you put anything particular in it?”

“Why—it did not seem altogether right to leave the interior blank—that would have been insulting. D—, at Vienna once, did me an evil turn, which I told him, quite good-humoredly, that I should remember. So, as I knew he would feel some curiosity in regard to the identity of the person who had outwitted him, I thought it a pity not to give him a clew. He is well acquainted with my MS., and I just copied into the middle of the blank sheet the words—

‘—Un dessein si funeste,
S’il n’est dinge d’Atrée, est digne de Thyeste.’ⁿ

They are to be found in Crébillon’s *Atrée*.ⁿ

SUGGESTIONS AND NOTES

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

- A. Should Poe have remained in Mr. Allan's countingroom?
- B. Do Poe's poems surpass his tales? If so, why?
- C. Did Poe write any *impersonal* poetry? If so, what?
- D. Which had the greater effect upon Poe's life—heredity or environment?
- E. He was a careful critic of literature. Why did he fail as an editor?
- F. Does Poe deserve any pity for his reckless, dissipated life? If so, why?
- G. Is Poe as great a poet as Lowell or Bryant or Longfellow? Give evidence to justify your answer.
- H. Reread *The Bells*. What attributes of greatness does it possess?
- I. Was Poe a genius? Try to find in your library the opinions of his critics.

NOTES

At best, notes prove to be of only small value to the student who is eager to master a given story or poem. Better than all the notes is a rereading (perhaps a tenth rereading) of an obscure place in the masterpiece. Reread until you gradually grow into the author's own feeling and see the thing as he saw it. Better than a set of notes is a small reference library—such a collection as seems worthy to be kept in one's home in later years. Know, too, the meanings of all words. Rid yourself of the habit of guessing—*know*. The better publishers have many books of reference. For example, Guerber's *Myths of Greece and Rome*¹ should be *owned*; not merely consulted in some library during vacant hours. The notes here appended are intended to be simple and helpful.

Some general instructions in the method of studying the prose tales are not amiss at this point. Read the stories hurriedly for the *plot*. Be certain you can trace it through all its various stages of progress.

¹ American Book Company.

Reread always. Note the opening lines. Are they conversational? Do they give a character hint? Do they give time or place?—Stories, like plays, have a *setting*. What is it in the case under consideration, and how is it created? Is it an interior or an exterior or both? Is it all physically real or is there anything imaginary about it? Setting will create an *atmosphere*. This is the effect or spirit of the story. Is it humorous? Mysterious? Gloomy? Exciting? Then, too, we must watch for *climax*; that is, the highest point of interest. Where does it come in a particular story? How do you know this is the exact climax?—To draw a character that is natural is called *character portrayal*. Are the people in the story made real and believable? Watch closely as you read the closing lines. Do they give a satisfying finishing touch? Does the story make one impression on you or many? If only one, it is carefully unified.¹

TO ——— (Page 13)

This poem has caused some argument relative to the date of its publication. It is probable that it first appeared in 1827, in *The Literary Messenger*. It is generally supposed to have been addressed to Mrs. Shelton, whom as Miss Royster he greatly admired.

The poem lacks the rhythm which is so charming a characteristic of Poe.

TO THE RIVER ——— (Page 13)

First published in 1829. This lyric is graceful, and suggestive of his later genius.

TO HELEN (Page 14)

This now famous poem first appeared in 1831. It was dedicated to Mrs. Stanard. The poet's liberty in *changing her given name* was spoken of in the introduction, page 7.

Mythology plays a very large part in this wonderfully delicate lyric. Although we must not be too certain as to possible allusions, he hints at the nomadic Ulysses in line 4, and adds both Psyche (the beautiful maiden who won the heart of Cupid) and the Naiads (the nymphs so frequently found in classic myths). Moreover,

¹ For fuller study of the short story see Introduction to Brander Matthews' *The Short-Story*, and J. Berg Esenwein's *Writing the Short Story*.

he brings in the places so closely associated with the beginnings and belief in myths, Greece and Rome.

Why omit the prepositions before "Greece" and "Rome"? Would they strengthen or weaken the stanza?

Note the poet's ways of picturing beauty. First, he refers to "hair" ("hyacinth" probably because of the fact that he loved this flower). Next he refers to her "airs" (or manners). Then, in the last stanza, he brings in posture. Here we have the added hint that he may be using the Greek word "Psyche" in its original meaning of "mind" or "soul."

Why such brevity in the last line of the poem?

THE SLEEPER (Page 14)

Originally appearing under the title, *Irene*, this poem was first published in a collection in 1831. Later it was printed in two magazines.

Pronounce the final "e" in "Irene."

Note the appeal to the senses. The whole poem is intended to produce the drowsiness expected from the title. This is one of Poe's arts—so-called "tone color."

Lethe. To drink from this stream of the underworld brought forgetfulness to the soul.

LENORE (Page 16)

This poem, as *A Pæan*, also appeared in 1831. Somewhat revised, it was published three times later.

Stanzas one and three are the comments of professed friends of Lenore. Stanzas two and four are Guy De Vere's replies to these.

broken is the . . . bowl. A biblical allusion referring, of course, to death.

Stygian—the adjective form of Styx, river of Hades.

Peccavimus. "We are guilty."

The spirit of the poem comes in the last stanza. Rather the triumphant "pæan" than the dreary "dirge." Why?

THE VALLEY OF UNREST (Page 17)

Another of the 1831 group. It shows little of Poe's gift of rhythm.

Hebrides obviously refers to the well-known group of islands.

A neat parallel crowns the poem in the last four lines.

HYMN (Page 18)

Published in 1835 in the tale, *Morella*.

How many times do you find the figure of antithesis? Poe makes a definite use of it. What use?

Utter simplicity and frank sincerity give the *Hymn* the right to be studied with interest.

TO ONE IN PARADISE (Page 19)

This poem was also published in 1835 and like the last lyric it is a part of another tale. It later appeared many times either in collected form or in the magazines of the day.

Note the little cumulative catalogue in line 13.

Regret, which is the basic note of so much of Poe's work, shows clearly here.

TO F—— (Page 19)

This appeared in 1835, under the caption, *To Mary*. The inspiration is still uncertain. It later was published under the title, *To One Departed*.

Note in these last poems how much appears as parenthetical matter. The modern poet more often employs the dash or a series of periods.

What figure of speech is employed in the last stanza?

TO ZANTE (Page 20)

Published first in 1837.

Zante is one of the Ionian islands.

No more is another example of the basic idea back of the poet's work. Regret caused Poe to write, even as patriotism caused Whit-tier, or the greatness of nature caused Bryant to write such remarkable lyrics.

"**Isola d'oro! Fior di Levante!**" is to be translated into "Golden Isle! Flower of the Levant!" Levant refers to that part of the Mediterranean to the eastward from Italy.

BRIDAL BALLAD (Page 20)

This poem first appeared in *The Southern Literary Messenger* in 1837. It was twice reprinted.

The *Ballad* is a fine example for the study of Poe's ability in the handling of a continued rime scheme (see lines 6, 8, 9, 10, and 11—"well, swell, knell, fell, dell.") A modern critic of versification asserts that this form of riming robs a poem of its meaning, since sense is thereby sacrificed for form. That the opposite is here true can be clearly seen.

THE CONQUEROR WORM (Page 21)

This rather sordid poetical picture was first published in 1843.

Mimes means players. Perhaps Poe recalls Shakespeare's idea of life as a stage and the people merely players (*Merchant of Venice*, Act I, Scene I).

formless things may easily refer either to the Fates or any supernatural force which bends the courses of men's lives. A hint of fatalism, but no more.

Phantom has somewhat the same meaning as "the blue flower" in the German legend. It typifies the unattainable; perhaps better, the object of our endless quests—Happiness, Wealth, Fame, or the like.

Let us forgive the creator of these verses the wretchedness he portrays so vividly, because after all he intends that we shall see in the misery he pictures the moral truth that we cannot long resist—"from dust to dust."

DREAMLAND (Page 23)

First published in 1844.

Note how the first six lines are used as the last six. What was the poet's object in so doing?

Eidolon means phantom or vision.

these lands. The known earth as opposed to the "ultimate dim Thule."

Thule. This term is at best quite vague. It was first used by Pytheas, the ancient Greek navigator, to refer to the Shetland and Orkney Islands. Later the term was applied to different portions of the frozen North.

Ghouls were unfriendly spirits of the night.

Eldorado became the subject of a later poem. It was the name of a fabled city, where the traveler found great wealth and precious jewels.

THE RAVEN (Page 24)

This—Poe's poetical masterpiece—first appeared in the *New York Evening Mirror* in the year 1845. Poe did not know, owing to physical and mental conditions, how famous it made him. He, however, lived long enough to discuss the poem and to give something of its mechanical structure and the ideas which were in his mind at its creation.

The conception behind the poem is simple enough. The sorrowful lover is trying to forget his grief for his dead Lenore. His reveries are at their deepest when the mysterious Raven is dramatically introduced. To it the lover expresses his doubts and fears, and the refrain, "Nevermore," is the inevitable reply or comment. His Lenore is lost forever; and "Mournful and Never-Ending Remembrance," typified by the Raven, alone remains to him,—“still is sitting, still is sitting On the pallid bust of Pallas, just above my chamber door.”

Some of the means Poe employed to attain the weird effects in this poem are worth noting. Alliteration abounds. Find the most striking examples. Through the sudden creation of an atmosphere the author is able to place us promptly in the position of the man who listened to the Raven's "nevermore." Note how vividly Poe describes the mental and physical setting before he brings to our attention the chief character—in this case, the Raven. More than thirty lines are taken up in preparation. Although Poe is primarily a lyric poet, he chooses in this instance the story form, and by unique treatment gives it remarkable dramatic power.

The closing stanza, weirdly melancholy, is highly artistic, and gives the prophetic stroke of finality to a master poem.

Raven. Birds are frequently used to symbolize different emotions. The dove means peace; the lark, aspiration; the nightingale, melody. Why is the raven used in literature as a bird of evil omen?

Pallas. The goddess of wisdom. What is the allegorical significance of the Raven's perching on a bust of Pallas?

seraphim. Hebrew plural of seraph.

Wretch is not addressed to the Raven but to the speaker himself.

nepenthe. A drug of the ancients taken to induce forgetfulness.

Prophet. The bird's odd coming and still stranger language make the lover into a half worshiper. Surely the Raven, he reasons, can tell him of his possible future in the distant Paradise (Aidenn).

balm in Gilead. See Jeremiah, VIII, 22.

EULALIE (Page 29)

This delicate lyric was published in 1845, and can therefore be placed with Poe's mature work. It is highly poetical and inclines toward the figure of hyperbole. The repetition in the closing lines of each stanza gives it a desirable newness and beauty of rhythm.

Astarte. A Phœnician goddess of love. Classical writers frequently confused her with Diana, goddess of the moon.

ULALUME (Page 30)

First published in 1847. In this poem Poe is supposed to have used a number of words, self-created, both for the necessities of rime and for the more plausible idea of keeping to the original atmosphere of weirdness. In *Ulalume* he again shows his delight in both the mystical and the supernatural.

Auber, Weir, Yaanek. Mythical places, doubtless chosen because of the strangeness and euphony of their names.

scoriac. Consisting of lava.

Astarte. See note on same, *Eulalie*.

Dian. Diana, goddess of the moon.¹

Lion. The constellation *Leo*.

Lethean. See Lethe, note on *The Sleeper*.

sibyllic. Mysterious. See *sibyl* in any dictionary.

TO HELEN (Page 33)

Published in 1848. Note that this lyric is unrimed. The imagery is distinct and the figures used are strong. The last four lines in the third section present a parallel structure worthy of careful study. As a whole the poem is more oratorical than poetical and reminds the careful reader of certain bits of Wordsworth.

FOR ANNIE (Page 35)

This poem, which appeared in 1849, has received scanty praise and been severely censured by a number of English scholars. Even

the ordinary student can readily see the lack of poetical expression in many of the words and in a number of the complete lines. At least it can be said for the poem that it has lived—a rare compliment to any literary work. We might add favorable comment upon the fact that it is lacking in the cynicism and morbid tone, which prevail throughout Poe's poems.

naphthaline. Inflammable.

myrtles. Signifying love in absence.

roses. Symbolical of love.

pansies. Stand for thoughtfulness.

rosemary. "There's rosemary, that's for remembrance." *Hamlet*, Act IV, Scene V.

rue. Symbolical of sorrowful remembrance.

THE BELLS (Page 38)

This was another poem to appear in 1849. To the student who desires a literary excellence in his work above his fellows, this selection will yield abundant material for the closest study. Study it for tone-color. There is a vital relationship existing between the words themselves and the meaning the poet desires for his readers. Study the meaning of its words. Here there is great variety and many will be new and, if mastered, will add richness to one's vocabulary. Poe has gone beyond mere definitions and has dealt in delicate shades of meaning. Follow them that you may better understand this poem. Master the rime scheme. Get the pictures. Note the happy parallels. Compare with Southey's *Lodore* for onomatopoeic effect.

Runic. Mysterious, magic.

ANNABEL LEE (Page 42)

This was first published in the *New York Tribune* in 1849 and was widely copied thereafter. The lines are easily understood and contain that wonderful element of the dramatic—conserved feeling. It is a simple, sweet ballad.

TO MY MOTHER (Page 43)

Published in 1849. Addressed as it was to one who was "more than mother" to the poet (Virginia's mother), it is a tender tribute

and one well deserved, according to all of Poe's biographers. Although put in the stiff sonnet form, it shows a warmth of feeling.

ELDORADO (Page 43)

This, the last of Poe's poems to be published, appeared in the Griswold edition of 1850. It may be considered as the poet's estimate of his own life—ever in quest and never attaining. In connection with the *Eldorado* it is interesting to remember Moore's *Utopia*, another Land of Promise; and the famous mythical Elysian Fields of the ancients.

THE ASSIGNATION (Page 45)

This tale was first published about 1835. It was then called, *The Visionary*, which title seems less vague and quite as appropriate. The fanciful is in high play and we catch the spirit of rare poesy, which did not leave Poe's soul even in the creation of weird tales. The story reflects, with unusual accuracy, a foreign atmosphere.

Careful study of the first page will reveal a new method of opening a story. It is a unique character study and at the same time a fresh mode of giving atmosphere. Is the latter more mental or physical?

Sir Thomas More. This historical character was a brilliant statesman and author. He was beheaded in the year 1535 for a disagreement with Henry VIII. His famous *Utopia* was widely read and his other writings were probably well known to Poe.

Cimabue. An Italian painter living in the thirteenth century. His originality was above that of his predecessors and so Poe used him to mark a certain artistic development.

Guido. Another Italian painter who lived in the latter part of the sixteenth century, and the early part of the seventeenth. He was known for his sympathy of craftsmanship and his soberly-treated themes.

Canova. Antonio Canova (1757-1822), an Italian sculptor, who executed a substitute for the "Venus de Medici." This work is now in the Pitti Palace.

"**Non ha l'ottimo etc.**" "The most excellent artist has no conception which is not contained in a single block of marble."

Politian. Angelo Poliziana (1454-1494), an Italian scholar and poet.

THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER (Page 59)

This, Poe's greatest story, appeared first in 1839 and later became a part of a collection called *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque*. It is a bit more than a "tale" since it is the product of a distinct and finished short-story technique. It merits a place among the world's masterpieces in this latter form of literary art.

Son coeur, etc. "His heart is a suspended lute; as often as it is touched it plays."

"The Haunted Palace." This ballad was first published in *The American Museum* in 1839. It found a place in this story because the wording seemed strikingly appropriate, as will be seen upon reading the complete tale. The song gives an excellent foreshadowing.

other men. This is said to refer to Watson, Spallanzani, Percival, and the Bishop of Landaff.

Our books. This and the paragraph which follows show Poe's wide reading. It must not be forgotten that he was a critic as well as a poet and teller of tales. He previously mentioned von Weber and Fuseli—one a German composer still held in high esteem by music lovers, although he died in 1826; the other a painter of the imaginative school of art. Poe had a genius for accumulating an inexhaustible supply of out-of-the-way facts, which he wove into his writing.

Gresset was a noted French poet of the eighteenth century; **Machiavelli** was both statesman and novelist; **Swedenborg**, a Swedish theologian; **Holberg**, a Danish author of the eighteenth century; **Flud**, an English physician who lived in the sixteenth century; **Tieck**, a noted name in this series of the great, being one of the most famous of German writers; and **Pomponius Mela**, an ancient Roman, who wrote upon geographical subjects.

The purpose of the paragraph is to give the reader something of the atmosphere of culture in the Usher mansion.

Mad Trist of Sir Launcelot Canning. Both author and volume are fictitious.

A DESCENT INTO THE MAELSTRÖM (Page 81)

This tale was first brought out in magazine form in 1841. The quotation, which Poe has taken from the writings of a seventeenth century English clergyman, gives the rather striking keynote. The

title (a Norwegian word meaning "whirlpool") helps the author to establish immediately a certain natural atmosphere. The-story-within-a-story, although frequently employed by modern story writers, is not a good device. There is an inevitable loss. In the hands of a master the loss naturally is not so apparent.

Nubian geographer. Presumably Claudius Ptolemy, the famous Egyptian astronomer and geographer.

Mare Tenebrarum. "Sea of darkness," a title given to the Atlantic by early writers.

Phlegethon is a river of Hades. Here used as a metaphor.

Kircher. Athanasius Kircher (1601-1680), a German scholar and mathematician.

THE GOLDBUG (Page 100)

This—easily the most popular of Poe's tales—was the winner of a one hundred dollar prize for short stories, offered by *The Dollar Newspaper*, of Philadelphia, in 1843. It has the requisites of a popular story—a hero of romantic tendencies, a plot of ingenious turn and twist, an atmosphere of adventure, and, through all, the allurements of mystery.

Swammerdam. Jan Swammerdam (1637-1680), a Dutch naturalist and noted collector of insects.

Captain Kidd. This character, so oddly combining the heroic and the erratic, has been widely discussed. His buried treasure has been the theme of many stories. Since he was such an intimate figure both in this country and abroad, the student will do well to read an extended account of his nomadic career.

cryptographs. Cryptography was to Poe a favorite subject for study. So interested was he in this odd theme that he became something of an authority and wrote upon the subject. He here uses it to excellent advantage, since it embodies both mystery and suspense.

Note how sharply the plot of this story breaks in two: where does the mystification end, and the explanation begin? Why is the dog introduced in the story? The negro? The goldbug? In the position of which character in the story does the reader find himself?

THE PURLOINED LETTER (Page 140)

This tale found its first publication in the year 1845. Together with *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* it is to be considered as a

successful forerunner of the modern detective story, which recently had great vogue. It shows a skillful handling of plot situations. Detective stories are dependent upon this latter ability and therefore this story may be taken as a model for its type. *The Purloined Letter* loses, as all stories of this class must lose, in that they are the product of the head rather than the heart. To many readers this loss appears to be insignificant.

Nil sapientiæ, etc. "To wisdom nothing is more offensive than too great acumen." **Seneca** was a noted Roman philosopher.

au troisième. Literally, third story (of a house), according to the French system of counting. Equivalent to our fourth story.

Abernethy. John Abernethy (1746-1831) was a famous English surgeon connected with St Bartholomew's Hospital, London.

Rochefoucauld. Francis La Rochefoucauld (rôsh' fôô kô') (1613-1680), a French epigrammatic moralist.

La Bruyère. Jean de La Bruyère (1645-1696), French moralist and essayist.

Machiavelli. Nicollô Machiavelli (1469-1527), writer and statesman of Italy.

Campanella. Tommaso Campanella (1568-1639), an Italian monk and philosopher.

"Il-y-a à parier, etc." "You can wager that every generally accepted idea, every received convention is foolishness, for it has suited the majority." **Chamfort** (1741-1794), a French writer of maxims.

Bryant. Jacob Bryant (1715-1804), an English antiquarian, known chiefly as a writer on mythology.

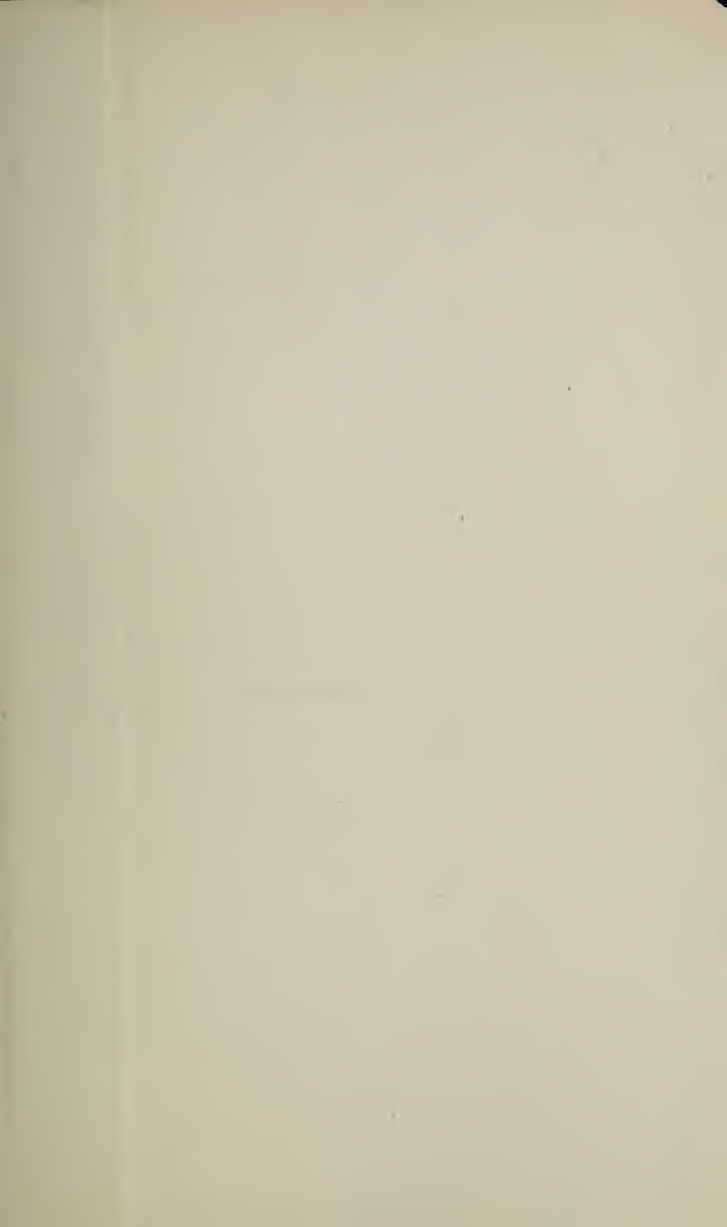
facilis descensus Avernî. "The descent to Hell is easy."

monstrum horrendum. "A monster to make one shiver." See *Æneid*, III, 658.

"Un dessein, etc." "If so wicked a plot is not worthy of Atreus, it is worthy of Thyestes." **Crébillon** (1674-1762) was the author of the tragedy, *Atrée et Thyeste*.





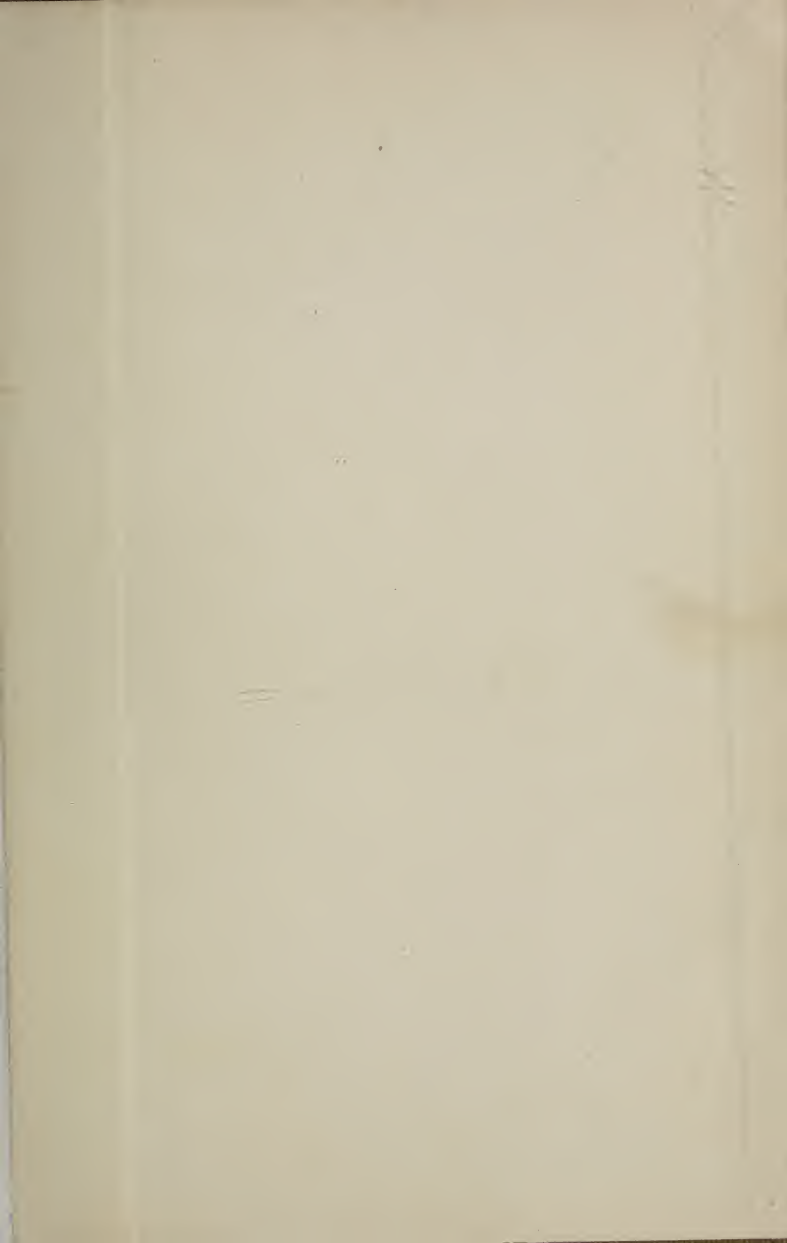


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